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Primed for Pentium

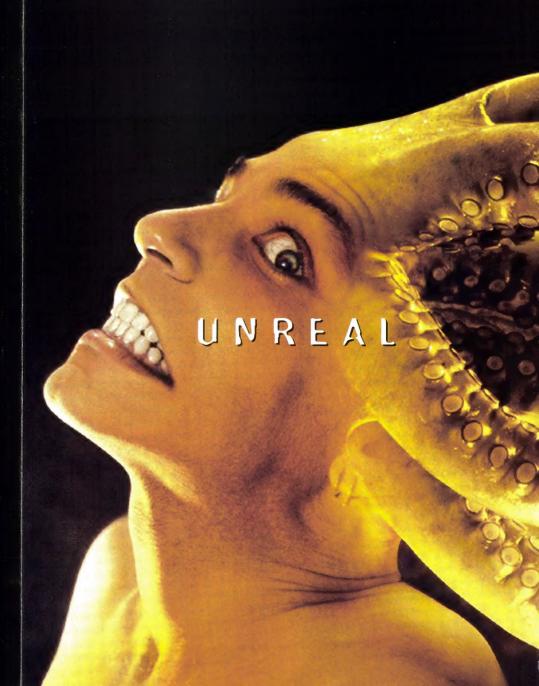
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HE MEDIEVAL CATHEDRAL OFTEN SERVED AS A CENTER FOR LEARNING. THIS IS GOING TO BE A VERY BAINFUL LESSON.

The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse lurk in the shadows before you. And they are not alone. Eidolon, the last-known Serpent Rider, lives. All of humanity has fallen to the archfiend and his hell-spawned hordes. As the Necromancer, the Assassin, the Crusader, or the Paladin, you must put an end to this ravenous onslaught. But first, you must defeat the Dark Generals. Each of them awaits your arrival separately in one of four demon-infested worlds. You will know them when you see them. They will be Death, Pestilence, Famine and War. Will you be the teacher? Or the student?



Possess distinct spells, powers and weapons.

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increased speed, fire power and jump distance.



Lose yourself in lightning storms, blowing leaves, earthquakes, spraying fountains and pouring rain.



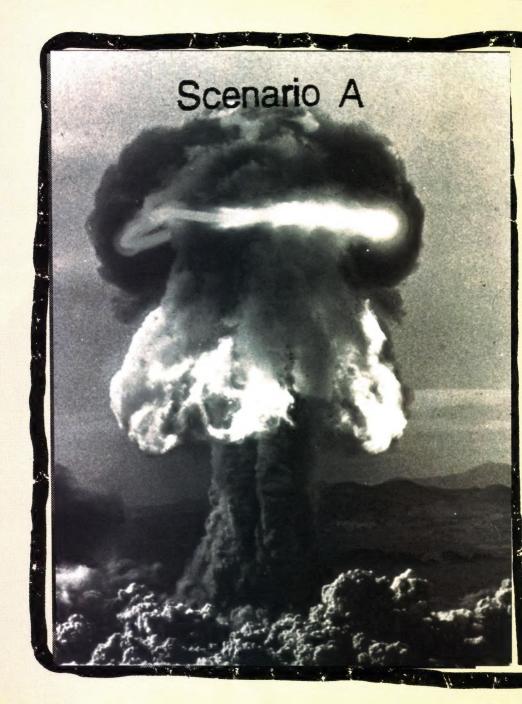
Bludgeon your way through four demon-infested worlds — Medieval, Egyptian, Mesoamerican and Roman. Smash stained-glass windows, collapse structural beams, pulverize trees and shatter egos.











Scenario B



THE ANSWER TO WORLD PEACE IS TO DIVERT ALL HUMAN CONFLICT AWAY FROM REALITY BY LOGGING ON TO HEAT.NET NOW!! CONTENTS OF BOX-

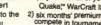
This box makes it easy to play against live competition on the HEAT.NET internet game network-more importantly, it is the bus on the road to world peace! CyberDiversion Theory says, if we divert humankind's primal aggressive urges away from reality and onto the internet, we can end real-life violence and create lasting peace!!

CYBERBULLETS CAUSE NO PAINI









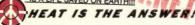
 HEAT™ CD (allows you to log on to HEAT.NET, where you can play almost all of your multi-player PC CD-ROM titles, including Quake,™ WarCraft II™ and Scud: Industrial Evolution[™)

2) six months' premium membership (earn frequent player points, compete in tournaments, gain access to the latest games)

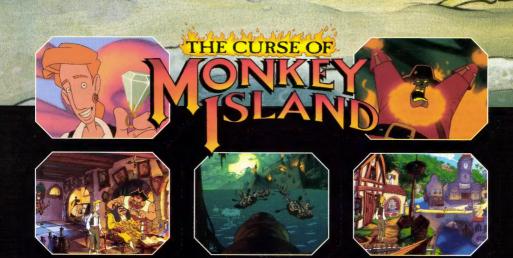
3) a month's free internet access

 exclusive HEAT games, including DeathDrome,™ Alien Race,™ and Net Fighter

5) HEAT T-shirt (show your solidarity with the Movement!) O ON TO HEAT NET NOW! A LIFE SPENT ON HEAT



Introducing the only भारताहर अविष्ट्राहिताहर that asks the esseptions वर प्रवाहर महिंदी





Presenting the long-awaited third installment in LucasArts' classic adventure series, Monkey Island. With features like 30-plus hours of gameplay, 8,000 lines of hilarious dialogue, oodles of challenging puzzles, high-resolution graphics, film-quality animation and a few surprise celebrity voices. Not to mention vegetarian cannibals and a guy named Snugglecakes. So get ready to embark on a rollicking, swashbuckling graphic adventure where the seagulls have better aim than the pirates, and the sharpest weapon is your wit. For Windows 95 CD-ROM

Check out the playable demo in select magazines or download it from our Web site at www.lucasarts.com



www.pcgames.com/features/snipe

OCTOBER 1997 VOLUME 4, NUMBER 8

What's Inside

IF YOU'RE SERIOUS ABOUT GAMING, **YOU JUST CAN'T MISS**







USER-MODIFIABLE GAMES

50 The Way You Do the Things You Do By Don St. John

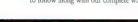
There's no question: It's a Golden Age of user-modifiable games. Hundreds of you are hacking levels, characters, weapons, and even total conversions of your favorites. Here's why you do it and what you get in return.

THE COMPLETE WALKTHROUGH

Dungeon Keeper: – **How to Be Really Evil**

By Rob Smith

It's not easy juggling all the details of a successful dungeon, you know. So if you want total command over the minions of madness in Dungeon Keeper, you'll want to follow along with our complete walkthrough



SPORTS GOES ONLINE

Nothing but Net By Jason D'Aprile

Sports games-first in the hearts of gamers, but last to the world of online play. Well, that's finally changing as developers figure out how to tame technical demons and design fun play. Check out the hows and wheres of successful sports gaming, wired-style.





Connecting Gamers to Games

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lmitation may be flattery, but it's not the best thing for a game, says The Player.

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The planet you wish you never heard of and launches its attack on Windows







TANARUS sets a new standard in multiplayer action-strategy

gaming - delivering futuristic tank warfare either online or on disc. Pick your team, load up your tank, and let it roll. Experience killer graphics as you navigate through sun-baked



deserts futuristic classcapes and frigid snow-swept lands.

Let many first early master and blow the









has just declared war on the internet,

95 this fall.



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MULTIPLAYER GAMING ONLINE

No Al online — every tank commander is very real — or practice solo with Windows® 95 version.

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Customize controls and peripherals, then choose from 5 different tanks with more than 30 different weapons modules.

POUNDING EFFECTS

Feel the effects that day and night cycles, and weather have on your tank drive.

EDITOR'S NOTE



STEVE KLETT

You Wanted a Story...

A syou, the PC Games reader, can attest, this magazine has long been a proponent of games that go the extra mile to provide players with a rich, involving story, rather than just a Ouake-like nonplot.

Where appropriate, our reviews detail the quality, or lameness, of a game's storyline; story factors heavily in our annual "Best Games of the Year" awards; and we've written several columns on the subject—to which you responded in force that a good story is, indeed, important in a game.

That's a big reason why you'll find Westwood's much-anticipated—and very long in the making—Lands of Lore: Guardians of Destiny featured on this month's cover (exclusive review on page 116). No, this game doesn't have a boatload of multiplayer options (none, in fact), excessive gore, or the latest take on the BFG. But it does have story (and humor) in spades, an absolutely essential ingredient that far too many adventure/action games ship without these days.

While it appears a little dated on the surface—much like Daggerfall—when you dig a little into the game, you'll find a well-crafted storyline that subtly leads you through a massive virtual world. And what a world it is—you don't have to explore every nook and cranny to make it to the game's resolution, but you'll be rewarded if you do.

Of course, we've got all the other goodies you've come to expect from *PC Games*. Our consistent coverage of the evolution of online and multiplayer gaming continues with a look at the future of online sports games. Sure, you can play golf over the Internet now, but what about football, baseball, or hockey? Find out in Nothing but Net on page 70.

Having a hard time becoming the ultimate evil in Bullfrog's addictive Dungeon Keeper? Finding it tough to keep those Vampires, Horned Reapers, Dark Mistresses, and Dragons in line? No problem: Our own diabolical Senior Reviews Editor, Rob Smith, brings you the ultimate step-by-step guide on exactly how to become evil incarnate, starting on page 58. There, you'll find everything you need to marshal your forces of the dark to overcome the sickening goodness that is The Avatar. Rob sure hopes you like it, because he doesn't want those permanent dark circles under his eyes and ghostly white complexion from too much dungeon-dwelling to be for naught.

User mods: Gamers are making 'em, and we're all playing 'em. If you're not, you're missing out on a lot of fun—not to mention good ways to extend the lives of your favorite games, and not just the obvious ones. Find out more on page 50.

As always, this issue's crammed with all sorts of gaming goodness, and it's only going to get better through the end of the year. Wait 'til you see what we have in store for you next month...

Steve Klett
Editor in Chief
sklett@pcgames.com

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e've packed this latest CD with enough gaming nuggets to last, oh, ages. Topping the bill is the exclusive PC demo of PlayStation favorite Resident Evil. We've also got X-Wing vs. TIE Fighter, Curse of Monkey Island, XCar, the full version of Zork 1, and loads more. Today is a good day to play.

Getting Started

Win 95

Simply place the CD in your disc drive and the interface will burst into life with the Autorun function.

Win 3.1

Insert the CD in your disc drive. In Program Manager, select the File menu and then Run. In the command-line box, type d:\pcgames.exe (where "d" is the letter of your disc drive).

Tech-Help FAQ

- When I try to run the interface, I get a "Can't find VB40016.DLL" message (or some other "Can't find" error).
- A: Run the setup program. Start Button -> Run -> type in x:Setup (where "x" is your CD-ROM drive).
- When I try to run the interface, I get a "Run-time error 367."
- A: If you get any kind of Run-time error, run the COMDLG16.REG file included on the root directory of your CD-ROM. Start Button -> Run -> type in x:comdlg16.reg (where "x" is your CD-ROM drive).
- During the setup routine, I keep getting "Can't Register file" errors.
- A: When you get this kind of error, you should get a dialog asking whether you would like to Abort, Retry, or Ignore. Just select Ignore for any and all errors of this type. Don't worry: the interface will still run without a hitch.
- O: This demo doesn't work.

- A: Read the notes accompanying each game in the description box—they will cover most problems. Please note that while we are happy to answer technical-support questions relating to the interface, the responsibility for the games lies with their respective publishers.
- Should I re-install DirectX when prompted by a game's installation program?
- As In general, no. Only try re-installing the latest version of DirectX if the game fails to run (particularly if you just get a blank screen after running a program).
- the Why haven't I gotten a CD-ROM with my magazine?
- A: Perhaps you bought, or have a subscription to, the non-CD version. To upgrade your subscription to include the CD, or to check if you should be receiving the CD, direct inquiries to pcgamessubs@pcgames.com.
- tried all of the above and I'm still having problems.
- A: Direct CD tech-related questions to ctou@pcgames.com.





GAMES.EXE

Exclusive:

Resident Evil (VIE)

Also:

Birthright (Sierra) Black Dahlia (Take 2 Interactive) Comanche 3 (NovaLogic) Curse of Monkey Island (LucasArts)

Douday (Impact Publishing)

Forced Alliance (Ripcord Games) G-Police (Psygnasis)

Heavy Gear movie (Activision)

ABC's Monday Night Football '98 (ABC Interactive)

Moto Racer GP (EA)

Quake Born Total Conversion

Sandwarriors (Interplay)

Take No Prisoners (Red Orb) Temujin movie (SouthPeak Interactive)

Triple Play 98 (EA)

Twinsen's Odyssey (Activision)

Warlords III (Red Orb)

XCar (Bethesda Softworks)

X-Wing vs. TIE Fighter (LucasArts) Zork 1 (Activision) FULL GAME

America Online: 50-hour trial

TEN

Deadlock Shareware **Quake Shareware** Buake Fnahler C&C: Red Alert Enabler

Mplayer

Big Red Racing Enabler Command & Conquer Enabler C&C: Red Alert Enabler Buake Fnahler

HEAT

We've pulled out all the stops to bring the demo of one of the hottest PlayStation games ever exclusively to PC Games.exe. Resident Evil tore up the console market and, backed by the power of 3D acceleration, looks set to make a similarly scary

impact on the PC. The install routine ensures that anyone with a Rendition, 3Dfx, or Matrox 3D card is going to get the full effect of this frightening 3D environment. Don't worry if you're lacking the horses; there's also a software-pow ered version to let you experience all the horror.

And you'll only find it here.



Twinsen's Odyssey

In what seems to be a PC market dominated by the first-person shooter. Activision shows that there's life in the adventure game vet with this engaging romp through the strange world of Twinsun, This PC Games A-List recipient offers beautifully detailed, incredibly challenging planets to explore and a variety of bizarre characters to meet. (If you get stuck, check out our exclusive walkthrough in this issue.)



Kyle Lemke has given PC Games first crack at showing off his QuakeC conversion, which brings these sci-fi arch-baddies to the Quake environment. This challenging, detailed conversion is a must-try for all Ouake-heads.



Take No Prisoners

Raven Software has developed a top-down view that could make quite an impact in the wide world of action games. It's fast-paced, explosive, and tremendous fun as you battle through an early level of this forthcoming title. Makes a fine change from the first-person perspective.



"Warlords Al not only blows away the immediate fantasy based competition, but other strategic wargames as well." -PC Games

"For this gaming series, third times a charm?" -PC Gamer

Warlords III Reign of heroes

"Warlards III pushes the envelope forward for turn-based games — especially for internet play." - Computer Gaming World



Jaique simultaneous movement mode for up to 8 layers in multiplayer games reveals each players effecting in real time.



lest your strategies with more than 80 different animated creatures and warriors, plus countless spells, abilities and revards over multiple terrains.



Struggle against computer opponents whose Almonitors your every tendency and plots elaborate intraresies against agor and your allies

Hordes of the Undead overrun the Selentine Empire, leaving utter devastation in their wake. From the ashes, a powerful new reign of heroes arises to contend for power and build a new empire. Arrayed against zombies, elementals and other unspeakables, you must arrange alliances, cast horrific spells, and lead your armies to victory... or be crushed beneath the enemy's merciless heel.

It not only sets a new standard in flight simulation, but goes well beyond anything out there. Introducing Sierra



Pro Pilot, Never before has a single flight simulator captured



this experience so completely. Here, you'll find the broad strokes and the fine touches. You'll choose from

JUST A SMALL PART OF

a hangar of five civilian aircraft, ranging from the introductory

Cessna 172 Skyhawk to the dual-throttled thrill of a Citation



The rich checking	
3,000 AIRPORTS NATIONWIDE/100'S OF CITIES	EVALUATED F
GLOBAL POSITIONING SYSTEM	PHOTOREALISTIC PANELS
AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL	DUAL EMNOTTES FOR MULTI-ENGINE AIRCKAFT

Jet. At the other end of the runway are 29 cities and over 3,000 airports, each rendered in exacting detail. All major

rivers, forests and canyons are afforded such



as a map. Within 25 nautical miles of any city, the flying world is



rendered with lifelike realism. You'll hear from Air
Traffic Control and other pilots, and learn to

CHAILED THE S

navigate the sky with the close company of other planes. Then, upon touchdown, debrief and compare your performance to over 30 full-motion preparation videos. This is Pro Pilot: The Complete Flight Simulator.

Both a statement of what a flight sim should be today, and the promise of what one can be tomorrow.





Battlezone, Reviews, Previews, News, Demos, Chat, Quake—it's all at www.pcgames.com.

A side from the obvious changes we made to our interface just recently, PC Games.com's got some new features that have either just been implemented or will soon be on the site for you to enjoy. Of course,

you'll still find all of the previews, reviews, and interviews—including the recently completed feature "How to Get a Job in Game Development."

Now, here's a breakdown of the new stuff you'll see. —Joe McClou

Download Section

We've gathered some of the coolest demos out there for your downloading pleasure—and we're always looking for more. If you know of a demo you think should be on our site, let us know by emailing our online manager, the one and only Marcale Wallace (mwallace@pcgames.com).



The Scion Sanctuary

WWW.UDIDIT.COM

Last month, PC Games featured a look at gamers' very own Web sites—the ones made by you, in devotion to your favorite titles. The journey continues on www.udidit.com, our new site that'll explore a different gamer-created site each month. The staff here at PC Games will scour the endless sea of gamer Web sites to find the ones that shine brightest. We'll judge sites based on aesthetics, content, imagination, and originality, then post the best ones' URLs on www.udidit.com, along with a quick description of some of their hughlights.

The S-Files

Ritual Entertainment's (www.ritual.com) upcoming 3D shooter Sin is still early in development, but it's already gaining strong interest in the gaming community. PC Games.com has landed an exclusive deal in which The Levelord, lead designer at Ritual, will provide weekly updates on the game's progress. This ongoing feature, The Sin Files, will continue until the game hits store shelves.





PC Games Radio Show

That's right: PC Games.com and Pseudo.com (www.pseudo.com), have put together a weekly radio show that will be broadcast every Thursday night. Check out Pseudo's site for more details and a schedule of who's going to be on.



ne Secret Levels of Dungeon Keeper We're not holding back...but nonetheless, you didn't see the way to get to-and through-the six secret levels of Dungeon Keeper in our complete walkthrough this month. No problem: Senior Reviews Editor Rob Smith has done the dirty work for you, and you can find the results at www.pcgames.com.

Game Levels Galore

We hear it from you over and over: Even if you don't make user levels for your favorite games, you like to download and play them. So check out this month's guide to usermodifiable games, then head to www.pogames.com for a quick link-guide to finding the best ones on the Net.



Gettysburg: The Expanded Interview

Sid Meier's back on the development trail, and we talked extensively with him about his upcoming strategy extravaganza. Get the full story at PC Games.com.

The Grumpy Gamer Debuts!

Around here, we have to listen to Assistant Editor Daniel Morris every day, and now you do too...well, you don't have to. But you'll want to: Dan's opinions (and he always has one) are entertaining, provocative, and sometimes just plain weird...but always irresistible. Check out The Grumpy Gamer on PC Games.com.

Lords of Magic: The Exclusive Web Preview

Sierra returns to its most familiar turf—the fantasy game. And Lords of Magic should prove to be a most engaging RPG. Get the full scoop only at www.pegames.com.





The New

PANZER GENERAL II. More than a sequel. An entire generation beyond anything yet seen in strategy games. And seeing is believing. Witness the LIVING BATTLEFIELD, a new standard for strategy game artwork. Featuring the heightened realism of hand-rendered maps — thirty painstakingly crafted battlefields that are faithful to the real ones of WWII — the LIVING BATTLEFIELD also showcases detailed 3D-rendered combat units with six facings.

Of course, this beauty is beyond skin deep. The phenomenal game play of the second generation PANZER GENERAL game engine is truly



THE LIVING BATTLEFIELD SERIES

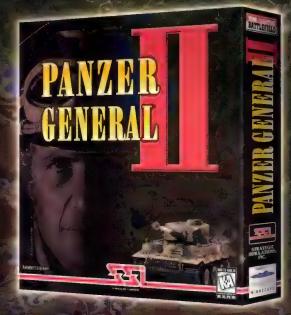
features the enhanced realism of hand-crafted maps and photo-realistic 3D-rendered combat units.

Face of Strategy Gaming.

awesome. Battles rage through WWII's Eastern and Western Fronts, North Africa, even the continental USA. Play one large campaign and three mini-campaigns — some of which are playable as either Axis or Allied forces. Edit scenario and unit data with the powerful Battle Editor for enhanced gameplay and extended replay. And with full multiplayer support, battles can include up to four players.

PANZER GENERAL II. The New Face of Strategy Gaming.

To Order: Visit your retailer or call 1-800-234-3088 (USA & Canada) with VISA or MasterCard.













INCOMING!

Question of the Month:

Adventure Games: Dead or Alive?

As the much-hyped Riven—a potential flagship for the point-'n'-click graphic adventure that erupted with its predecessor, Myst—draws nearer to completion, we're wondering what you think about the genre. What's its status? Are today's graphic adventures entertaining, or do they seem pale compared to some of gaming's fantasies of old? Where are adventure games headed, and, more importantly, where should they go? As always, one letter-writer will receive a super-duper PC Games T-shirt and a free game. Send mail to Letters to the Editor, PC Games, 951 Mariner's Island Blvd., Ste. 700, San Mateo, CA 94404; fax: 415-349-7482; email: pcgamesletters@pcgames.com. Please include your full name with each letter.

[Editor's note: Blade's (aka The Opponent's) recent rants have created quite a stir—so much so that we've decided to dedicate this month's letters page to your responses.]

No More Rudeness

Blade, I can't find one problem with your column or any of your suggestions ("There's Just No Need for That," July/August). I have seen many foul-mouthed and shouting chatters online. I think it's about time that online-chat sessions should be monitored more closely, and those who offend should be removed. Thanks for bringing your ideas to the public eye; I hope some of the gamers reading your column will share your opinions.

Edward Barker Via email

Personally, I find what you had to say in July/ August's The Opponent column disturbing at best,

Like every other thing that people do in this world, the use of online games and online chat rooms is simply a way for people to express themselves. The Internet thrives off this kind of freedom: the freedom to escape everyday life.

When you take it away, you are simply destroying its whole purpose.

Adam D. Mitchell Via email

I enjoyed your The Opponent column in the July/August issue. I think what you are saying needs to be considered by all those flamers and spammers out there.

I play X-Wing vs. TIE Fighter over the Net and enjoy it, but there seems to be a fairly large group of people who get into the chat rooms and cuss everyone out, then proceed to purposefully go after the rookies. Ignoring them simply doesn't work. I'm only 12 years old and have had many a lewd comment thrown in my direction (hee hee hee—but 1 get my childish revenge by blowing them to tuny pieces). It disgusts me to see all these perverted little fools tell a 10-year-old they're gonna

good." I don't see why the companies making these games can't have people in the Gaming Zone (or wherever the majority goes to play) with the players to lock these people out for good, or at least for a good long time.

"**** him up reeeeeaaaaal

Regarding online communities: Yes, many of them are made up of 90 percent arro-

gant fools pretending to be someone else. But I have stumbled across a few good ones. Don't give up on them yet.

Kevin Banda Via email

The Plot's the Thing

I think Blade is seriously underestimating gamers' intelligence when he says they don't need a story ("Once Upon a Time...Who Cares?" Face-off, July/August).

Look at the popularity of adventure games. RPGs. MUDs. If we were all like Blade seems to think, books and movies wouldn't exist! I, for one, am damned sick of all these mindless first-person gorefests, and often find myself booting up the classics—things like Sierra's old adventure games. They

After poring through the responses to July/August's Duestion of the Month ("Great Games Revisited"), it's clear that many of you have gaming classics you'd love to see revemped. Nominees crossed all compenies and genres: Choplifter, Asteroids, Westeland, Seal Team, Racing Construction Set. Summer/Winter Games (we loved those!), Impossible Mission, Ultima's Age of Enlightenment Trilogy (IV-VII)...and many, many more. But our tevorite idea—at the very least, the most amusing—came from subscriber Devid Chen, who gets a mee PC Games T-shirt and a free game.

Concept: Take the classic Nintendo game Duck Hunt and combine it with today's high-tech shooters for a dynamic 3D experience.

Story. As a crime witness on the run, you've got crucial evidence—until if gets eaten by a duck. Now you have to kill every quacker in the pond, along with interfering crocodiles, thugs, duck hunters, and that damn pesky dog Weapons. Rocks, Slingshot, Shotgun, Hunting Rifle, Rocket Launcher(!) Gamesiov Multiplayer Duck Hunts would include options like Who Can Shoot the Most Ducks, Capture the Flag.

Sounds is higher states to use Sevent. —Ed.

and, of course, a Duckhunter Match.

may not be technologically sexy, but they're a helluva lot more fun than all the 3D shooters combined.

Have you noticed that most of the coolest games out there have decent storylines or are really innovative? I-76. MDK. Twinsen's Odyssey. Ultima Online. Thank goodness there are a few developers left who have thought patterns beyond "You can kill people with a lot of gore everywhere. That'll sell." I, and a lot of other gamers, are fed up with that kind of design philosophy.

Despite what Blade—and most game designers—seem to think, gamers are intelligent creatures who have the ability to get into a story and might actually want something different. Until game companies realize that, they won't be making any money off of me.

Jeremy Penner, Proud Owner of Not a Single First-Person Shoot-'em-up Via email

Matt Dwyer Mattman 15@juno.com
2280 Willowbrook Dr.
Huntingdon Valley, PA 1500C
Motasem Matarneh matarneh@go.com.jo

Looking to meet fellow gemers? Send us your full name along with an email address, postal address, or fax number, and we'll do our best to fit you in to our ongoing list.

PREPARE TO ENTER

One Grand Prize

Pentium 200 courtesy of Micronics and Orchid Technologies featurings

- 32 MB RAM, 2 GB Hard Drive, 3x CD ROM
- SoundBlaster 16
- . Ovehid Kelvin 64 video eard
- Orchid Righteons 3D eard leaturing 3DK's Voodoo Graphies
- Microsoft Win95
- Thrustmaster Rage 3D Gamepad
- EIDOS Interactive's Deathtrap Dungeon

Eight First Prizes

- Orchid Righteous 3D eard featuring
 3Dfx's Voodoo Graphics
- · Thrustmaster Rage 3D Camepad

Ten Second Prizes

- EIDOS Interactive's
 Deathtrap Dungeon
- Official Deathtrap Dungeon Strategy Guide









IAH LIVINGSTONE S

DEATH TRAP

Clue #1: WARNED

www.eidosinteractive.com

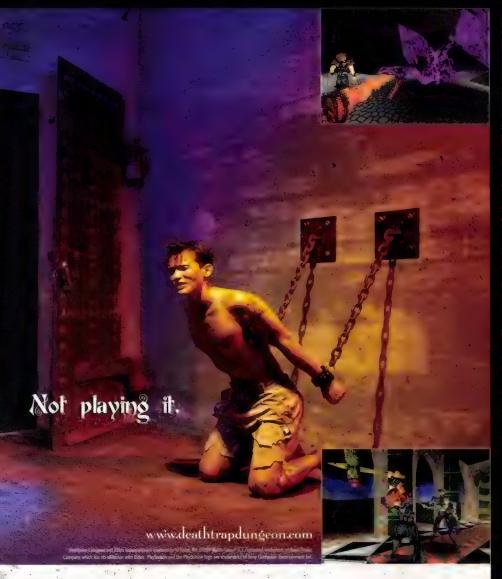
1. No purchase necessary. To enter, find the three clues at the following locations: Clue #1 in this ad, clue #2 at www.pcgamee.com (Destitize) Dungeon Contest), clue #3 at www.eldosinteractive.com (Destitize) Dungeon Contest). After finding all three clues, register the winning phrase at www.eldosinteractive.com at the Destitize) Dungeon Contest page. No purchase or payment of any money is necessary to enter. One entry per household. Entries must be received by October 31, 1997. All entries become exclusive property of EIDOS Interactive and will not be acknowledged or returned. Only one prize per family, organization, or household. Prizes of Grand Prize winner will receive a Pentium 200 ocurries of Microsica and Orbrid Technologies. The system will have 32 M8 RAM. 208 Hard Drive. StandBates 116, 4cc DR RAM. Crofid Relvin

2. Prizas: One Grand Priza winner will receive a Pentium 900 courteey of Microtics and Orchit Technologies. The system will have 32 MB RAM. 208 Hard Drive, SoundBlaster 16, 4x CD ROM. Orchit Righteous 30 featuring 2016-16 Votode Grandprice, Microsoft Winfeld, mouse and depheard. In existine, the Sarah Prize winner will receive a Thousand Region 20 featuring 2016-16 Votode Grandprice, Microsoft Winfeld, mouse and depheard. In existine, the Grand Prize winner will receive an Orchid Righteous 30 card featuring 2016-18 Votode Grandprice and a Throutimaster Rage 90 genepad. Ten Second Priza winners will receive a copy of Destinating Durgeon and the official Destinating Durgeon retailing the Sarah Prize will be selected in the exercise 30 genepad. Ten Second Priza winners will receive a copy of Destinating Durgeon and the official Destination Card Priza winners will receive a copy of Destination of the Sarah Prize Prize will be selected in the exercise of dequalification, Grand Prize. Prize prizes and Second Prizes will be under the form of the prize of the pri



DEATHTRAP

Geat me. Whip me. Just don't hit that Quit button." Consider it your battle cry. Then bring on the skeletal warriors, zombies and countless other undead denizens. Each one is another chance to slice and dice like a Ginsu* knife gone bad. Or simply cast a spell



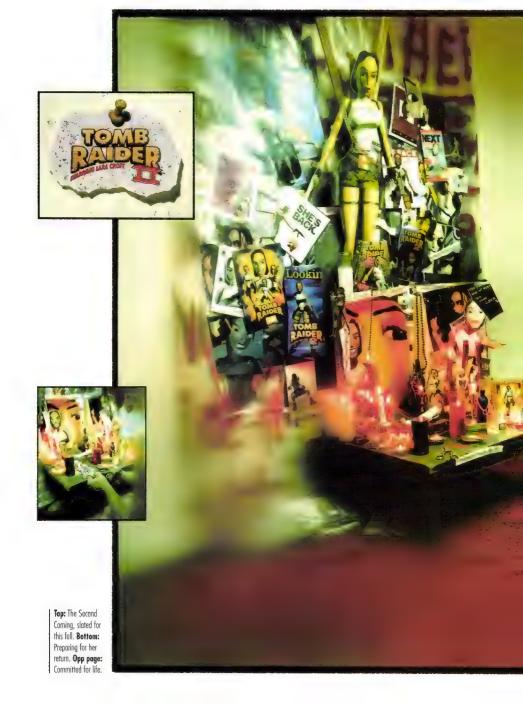
on the evil priestess whos done you wrong. Because in this cavernous maze of devious traps, it's all about cheating death at every turn, blurring that fine line between pleasure and pain. And just when you think you can't take it anymore, consider the alternative.





EIDOS

You've been warned.



4 A.M., TALLAHASSEE, FL. TWO DRUNKS BATTLE IT OUT DOWN THE HALL. THE 38 EXPRESS SQUEALS TO A HALT EVERY HALF HOUR ON THE STREET BELOW. SLEEP DOESN'T COME EASY IN ROOM 23. BUT FOR 19-YEAR-OLD RAY COOPER, IT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH THE NOISE. AS HE SAYS, "IT'S BECAUSE SHE'S ALL I SEE EVERY TIME I CLOSE MY EYES."

Eidos Interactive, Tomb Raider, Lara Croft and her likeness are trademarks of Eidos, Plc. @1997 Eidos.

GAMEWIRE

3D Revolution Marc

or anyone who bought a new 3D-video accelerator last year, and even those who didn't, the moment you've dreaded has arrived. The 3D boards of 1996 are about to be eclipsed by a new and improved clan of contenders. While the 3Dfx or Rendition board you purchased will by no means be obsolete, the new kids on the shelves will be offering expanded performance specs that will make you envious. And for those gamers who've held out,

Resident Evil was born for 3D acceleration.

waiting to see which of last year's cards came out on top, the fall class of 1997 will give you a few more good reasons to procrastinate.

STB Velocity

Like muscle cars of old, STB's Velocity 128 3D all-in-one accelerator packs a tremendous amount of power, STB decided

that it wanted to own the Direct3D (D3D) acceler-

Most new

games like

Heavy Gear

ator action without compromising fast 2D performance. If any video card is going to make suspicious gamers into D3D believers, the Velocity is it. With 4MB of SGRAM powering a 128-bit nVidia RIVA 128 chip, the Velocity will support bilinear and trilinear filtered texture mapping and Z-buffering, STB says the card will deliver extra performance at full-screen resolutions as high as 1600-by-1200 in 16-bit color, or 1280-by-1024 in 24-bit color, because the Velocity stores and retrieves textures in its own fast memory rather

than slowing down the computer's CPU. Street price is expected to be \$199.



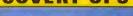
Diamond Viper and Monster 3D II A new accelerator from Diamond called the Viper

is configured so closely to STB's card that the pair could be considered twins. Also a 128-bit 3D/2D all-in-one card, the Viper uses a similarly configured nVidia chipset and 4MB of

STB Velocity is one of the first of the new beefy D3D cards.

continued on page 33

COVERT OPS



Grophia Lines Targata Carna

F/A-18 Hornet pilots will soon get to conquer the skies in Korea.



308Mit Partier Screener

proprieta a proprieta por la proprieta por

Pentiums just got

Biddle to accomp for PART, with Printers I stowers will be been be over 12 to Salphing on

October 1997 • PC GAMES

At the Wire





Running With Scissors wants you.

Sierra

Postal Guns For Gamers

Developer Running With Scissors made a big deal about promoting its new game Postal to industry hacks at the E3 show last June. Then these guys made a big play for gamers in July with a Microsoft-sized beta test of the game. The Scissors crew shot for 10,000 gamers to put in time on Postal, offering them prizes such as a gametweaked Pentium and a final version of the game signed by

the designers. The beta test ended in August, and from what we've seen of

the game, you should check out the demo, which can be found at www.gopostal.com.

Last-gasp sale.

Slashes Screamer

With a whole bunch of improved 3D cards set for release soon, Sierra's Screamin' 3D accelerator is nearing the end of its life cycle. Still, this

Rendition-based card remains a solid value, and it's just been reduced to \$149.95. Bargain hunters may find even lower discounted street prices.

QuakeCon Goes to Rix

After four days of intense deathmatching in Plano, Texas, Dan "Rix" Hammans took first place in this year's QuakeCon tournament, which drew more than 300 entrants. This was the second year Hammans traveled by car all the way from Ames, Iowa, for the tournament, although he admits his performance in 1996 was less than exceptional. After the blood dried, the top five QuakeCon

players this year were Rix, Tim "Forego"
Baker, Monte "Grayson" Martinez, Jason
"AceJas" Chartin, and Walter "Walter-311"
Polischuk. Kornelia Takacs, who took first
place earlier this year at the Computer
Game Developer's Conference tourney,
came in eighth place.



By the time you read this, the long-maligned Direct X 5 should be in circulation. So don't



QuakeCon drew contestants from as far away as Japan.

be surprised when that new game vou bought wants to install new DirectX drivers. Microsoft claims the latest revision is more stable. Among the new features of DirectX 5 are a host of streaming technolo-

gies designed primarily for the Web, as well as a new foundation layer that's expected to greatly improve the performance, capabilities, and compatibility of Direct3D, while easing programmer concerns about the API's complexity. For all of you who are eager to use the much more stable Windows NT as a game platform, version 5 will have built-in support for Ensemble's Age of

Empires uses DirectX 5.



Squart Attack

FireTeam may have the right stuff.

More 30 Audie Acolstos

The first of the control of the cont

Outlaws is a prototype 3D-audio game.

At the WIRE

8th Wonder

Tooting its whistle, 8th Wonder Games announced plans to develop an online role-playing game system that will be dedicated to multiplayer RPG gameplay, Lead designer Sean Patrick Fannon wrote The Fantasy Role-Playing Gamer's Bible.

DWANGO Joins Intel

Not only is Intel preying on hardware companies to join its Pentium II game forum, but it's also sunk its teeth into DWANGO. The online-gaming service recently announced it's joining Intel's drive to expand Pentium II game applications as a founding member.



Gravis' new gamepad.

Gravis Guns for SideWinder

With its new Xterminator gamepad. Gravis hopes to jump ahead of its competition this fall by offering an expanded feature set, Included with this \$69,95, 10-button pad is a POV switch, flippers, and a throttle, as well as proportional buttons that let gamers control the speed and intensity with which button pushes are relayed to the software. Xterminator also uses Gravis' GrIP multiplayer technology.

At the Wire

Death from above in Take No Prisoners.

DirectX 5. Leslie Evan.

DirectX marketing manager at Microsoft, says that Direct X 5 will be included in the next version of Windows NT, which is expected to begin shipping in the first quarter of 1998.

Out-of-Body Gibbing

The folks at Raven get around. Not only are they working closely these days with Activision on Hexen II, but they also are working hard with Brøderbund's Red Orb division on Take No Prisoners. This action game mixes some Duke Nukem-style gameplay with the same novel topdown view employed in Mageslayer. Although it takes

some getting used to, the interface adds some fun gameplay features to the genre. In multiplayer games, for instance, the top-down view gives gamers a better idea of what's around them and where opponents are converging. There's also some nifty weapons interactivity with the levels, with laser beams reflecting off walls. Raven is building in six multiplayer games, including standard deathmatch.

cooperative missions, an assassin mode, and three variations on Capture the Flag. In single-player mode, you

play Slade, a mercenary attempting to infiltrate a post-apocalyptic city infested with nasty thug types. Your goal: steal enough technology to build a toxinsafe environment.

Gateway Moos for DVD-ROM

If you're mulling over buying a Pentium II system from Gateway 2000, don't be surprised when you get the sales pitch for a DVD-ROM drive. The manufacturer is making DVD-ROM drives a standard option on its G6-266 systems. Gateway expects the market for DVD-ROMs to expand rapidly during the next 12 months.

Play More, Cuss More

And the winner of the "most profane computer game ever" is...Redneck Rampage! Xatrix Entertainment has taken cursing to new levels with an add-on that replaces existing dialogue with outtakes previously considered too vulgar. The Cuss Pack is available for \$1 through Interplay's Web site at www.interplay.com. The company's sole adults-only hitch is that gamers must pay via credit card.



Swear, then slice, with the new Cuss Pack,

Half-Life Gets Level Editor

Valve has purchased WorldCraft—the level editor used by many Ouake fans-and will include an enhanced version with its Ouake-engined game Half-Life in November, In addition, WorldCraft developer Ben Morris has joined Valve to help tailor the editor to Half-Life and future game projects. The new version of WorldCraft will support 24-bit textures, vertex manipulation, chipping planes, Direct3D, OpenGL, chrome, and translu

-George T. Chronis and J.V. Bolkan



Gateway makes DVD-ROM

Power Grabs



300 has seen the light and given up consoles for PC games like Uprising.

No More Consoles

3DO is serious about being a PC-software developer. Not only has it recently sold off the last of its video-game hardware business to Samsung for \$20 million, but 3DO has also turned over the last of its rights and patents on the 64-bit M2 technology to its M2 partner Matsushita for stock valued at approximately \$13 million-divorcing itself from any future royalties. How will 3DO use all of this money? Mercurial chairman/CEO Trip Hawkins says the cash will be used to develop a stronger lineup of PC games.

Interplay Captures Discovery's Flag

Discovery Channel Multimedia is well known for its reference CD-ROMs, but not as a game developer. So to get it across to gamers that its three new adventure/strategy titles-Byzantine: The Betraval, The Hidden Land, and Evolution-are worth checking out. Discovery has cut a deal with Interplay for distribution of the games this fall.

From Python to Tamagotchi

After a year of financial indigestion, 7th Level, the home of Monty Python games, is looking for some new franchise hits and has partnered with Bandai to gain access to the latter's Tamagotchi toy license, a huge best-seller in Japan. Look for the CD-ROM game this fall: it will give parental gamers much more entertaining and extensive interaction with their digital pets.

NEC Accepts The Force

To help get more PCs into living rooms and video arcades, Intel has been signing up some prominent partners to help position the Pentium II processor as a game platform. The latest company to join Intel's game-forum crusade is NEC Electronics, a primary partner in the PowerVR

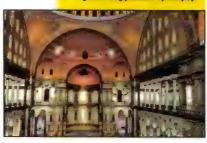




technology that serves as the foundation for VideoLogic's Apocalypse 3D line of video accelerators. NEC will become part of Intel's cooperative effort to boost acceptance of high-performance Pentium hardware for game applications.

-George T. Chronis

Byzantine is one of the new Discovery games being published by Interplay.



3D REVOLUTION cont.

SGRAM to deliver exceptional D3D performance. Street price again is slated to hang out around \$199. Knowing that many gamers are still skeptical

of D3D-only accelerators, Diamond also has an update to its Monster 3D 3Dfx accelerator in the works, Using the new Voodoo II chipset, this year's model will deliver twice the performance, 800-by-600 resolutions, and fully scalable windows in Windows 95. says Diamond. For power gamers, Diamond will directly support duo-card Monster 3D setups for the first time. If you're thinking about buying two Monster 3D IIs, Diamond's individual units will be priced the same as the original-in the \$200 range. But don't ex-

pect to use a Monster II with a Monster I.

Diamond says that won't work.

VideoLogic Apocalypse 5D

the first 30/20

PowerVR card.

Still trying to muscle its way into the 3D big leagues is PowerVR from VideoLogic and NEC. Although PowerVR's original

VideoLogic launches PCX1 chipset lacked some crucial features such as Z-buffering, the new PCX2 chipset fixes those deficiencies. Joining this year's Apocalypse 3Dx pass-through accelerator is an all-in-one 2D/3D card called the Apocalypse 5D, which is based on the PCX2. Using a Tseng Labs ET6100 128-bit controller, the 5D's 2D performance will be right up there with Diamond's Stealth 2000 Pro and Matrox's Millennium II, says VideoLogic. The Apocalypse 5D also comes with 4MB of SDRAM texture memory and an additional 2MB of MDRAM for 2D duties. VideoLogic says the PCX2 chipset is beefy enough to deliver high frame rates at resolutions as large as 1024-by-768 in 24-bit color. Because there are a growing number of games that have been adapted to work with the PCX2 hardware, such claims are becoming a bit more attractive. To prove its point, VideoLogic will bundle WipeOut XL, Resident Evil, and MechWarrior 2 with the Apocalypse 5D at a somewhat hefty street price of around \$279.

Rendition 2200

Although Rendition isn't revealing which videocard vendors have agreed to build accelerators using their chipset, insiders at the company say preproduction boards are benching 20 percent faster than the series 1000 chipset used in Vérité boards on the market today. Expect more information on new Rendition-based boards by Christmas.

-George T. Chronis

GameWire COMMLINE

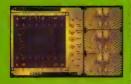


Show EA the S

Electronic Arts is serious about expanding its online store. So intent is the publisher on easing consumer fears of buying via the Internet that it has partnered with INTERSHOP Communications to bring the latter's eCommerce technology to online shopping at www.ea. com/eastore, making it swifter and more secure.

Chess Bludgeon

Think you could do better against a computer that Garry Kasparov did? Late this year, Interplay will release U.S.C.F. Chess, designed by the United States Chess Federation to be an extremely



challenging opponent with more than 300,000 opening moves. The U.S.C.F. has also built in an official ranking system that lets gamers send results off to the organization to qualify for real-life tournament entries.

Board Games "R" Us

Hasbro knows its bread and butter lies in expanding its toy and board-game franchises. Due out this fall are Pictionary and Boggle. Pictionary will support up to three players or three teams, while Boggle will feature five variations on the original word game.

-Amy Crigger



Red Orb Does Mplayer

Fans of the Warlords series take note. Warlords III: Reign of Heroes and a number of other Red Orl (Broderbund) games are joining the Mplayer stable. The other Red Orb games include Warbreeds and Rayen's Take No Prisoners. All three games will feature free online-match connections.

Another Game Site With Attitude

Already a well-known player on the Internet with its Happy Puppy and Games Domain Web sites, Attitude is teaming up with Macmillan Digital Publishing to create a new Internet-game venture called RealmX. The site's goal will be to showcase the amateur work of avid gamers, as well as to provide game add-ons, patches, cheats, strategy guides, level-editing tools, and links to enthusiast Web pages. The site will go live this fall at www.realmx.com.

AT&T Links With GameStorm

America Online may be angering its gamer subscribers with its new per-hour pricing, but AT&T WorldNet is trying to sweet-talk them. The Internet provider just struck a

deal with Kesmai so that AT&T subscribers will have direct access to the latter's GameStorm online games. Titles included in the deal are Air Wartior II, Aliens Online, Jack Nicklaus Online Tour, BattleTech, and Online

Casino. GameStorm titles will appear on the "Play" page on www.att.net.

Free-mail

Don't want to let other online gamers know your real email address? Want more money for games? If you don't mind being greeted by advertising when you check for email, the Excite people want you to use their



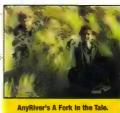
Red Orb games

new free email option. The search service is buying out such established players as HorMail, NetAddress, and Juno, bringing all three services together under the MailExcite banner. Excite says subscribers signing up for MailExcite will get a lifetime account no matter how the account is accessed. Other standards, such as attachments, address books, and automated replies, will also be featured.

TEN Trims Costs

The layoff of more than 80 employees and confirmation that TEN plans to sublease some of its prime real estate have drawn the attention of the San Francisco Chronicle,

which ran a report speculating that the online-game service may be in financial trouble. Indicting the service's \$19.95-per-month business model, the newspaper suggested that the proliferation of competitors such as Mplayer, Engage,



and others may be hurting TEN's bottom line. In response, TEN says it has confidence in its business model and is only streamlining its operations in order to better compete. TEN confirms that it's still considering a public stock offering in order to raise capital, and that it's negotiating to acquire the remaining assets of AnyRiver, the

> company that brought us Fork in the Tale and the yet-to-be-released Flying Saucer. It's questionable whether TEN plans to go into software development; the Chromcle reports that TEN's real interest in AnyRiver is to gain access to the developer's \$6 million line of credit.

Traffic Jams Ahead

Look out! If you thought there already wasn't enough Internet bandwidth to go around for online deathmatches, it's going to get worse.

According to research firm IDC/Link, owned by PC Games' corporate parent International Data Group, the number of computers and other devices accessing the Internet will grow from 32 million in 1997 to more

than 300 million by the end of 2001.
During that same period, the number of actual users will expand from 28 million to 175 million. The findings are taken from a new report titled The Global Market Forecast for

Internet Commerce. - George T. Chronis



MESTIORM

Look for this loop on

AT&T WorldNet.

TOYS

The same technology that goes into force-feedback sticks is

heading for the arcades.

Mitsumi's 24x CD-ROM drive.

GAMEWIRE

Compaq's 300MHz Attack

The obsolete beat goes on. As if talk of 266MHz Pentium IIs weren't enough to get gamers salivating, Compaq is readying a 300MHz consumer model called the Deskpro 6000. At press time, Intel still hasn't contirmed availability of the 300MHz CPU, but PC manutacturers are usually the first to let new CPU information slip. Prices for the Deskpro 6000 haven't yet been set.

24x Drives March On

Despite manufacturer claims, there's still a lot of confusion surrounding the new 24x CD-ROM drives. Are they actually 24x, or are they really just 12x drives that use software caching to simulate 24x speeds?

Mitsumi claims its new FX240 uses both CLV and CAV modes to enable a true 24x spin rate. The top average access rate is 90ms, and

optimum data transfer is rated at 3,600KB per second. List price on the FX240 is \$249

Nineteen Inches for Less

ViewSonic is serious about low-cost, big-screen monitors. This fall, the company's Optiquest line is releasing its V95 19-inch monitor at a street price of \$995. This price puts the V95 at the low end of its price category, where other manufacturers often





charge \$200
more. With 18 inches of
viewable screen area, a flat screen, and a .26 dot
pitch, the V95 isn't scrimping on the details to
offer the great price.

Refurbs Rule

Ever wonder what happens to older Pentiums? A company called Recompute

did, too. Recompute acquires everything from 486s to P133s and remanufactures them with better video cards and peripherals. Prices start at \$599 and go to \$1,499. To mollify those of you skeptical of buying less-than-new systems. Recompute offer a seven-day money-back guarantee and a 90-day warranty.

Immersion Uses Force on Arcades

PC gaming continues to infect other platforms. The latest crossover technology is Immersion's force-feedback architecture, which is being targeted at video-game arcades. Immersion is partnering with Happ Controls to bring the technology to arcade input controls.

Happ is already a leading provider of input devices for coin-operated games.

Aureal Takes On Sound Blaster

Creative's Sound Blaster tranchise is the undisputed king of the computer-game hill, but that's not stopping upstart Aureal Semiconductor from trying to muscle in on Creative's turf. Aureal has already developed the A3D technology that's behind Diamond's Monster Sound 3D pass-through card. Now Aureal has come up with a sound processor called Vortex, designed to go into a stand-alone PCI

Aureal muscles in on Creative.



3D

sound card. According to Aureal, the Vortex chip can route up to 100 streams of audio data simultaneously, something ISA based cards can't do. With backward Sound Blaster Pro emulation support

for legacy DOS games and a 32-voice wave-table synthesis engine for MIDI compatibility. Vortex-based cards of the future could be senous contenders. Vortex also supports Aureal's A3D standard as well as Microsoft's DirectSound standard.

Point and Shoot

Finally, PC gaming is starting to look the way Hollywood portrays it. If you ever wondered when you'd see something that looked and worked like virtual-reality input devices in the movies, try next year, when Reality Quest delivers its Glove controller. This device translates wrist movement into up, down, right, and left movements on a computer screen. The Glove will arrive for console gamers by Christmas.

Yeah, but can you

circle-strafe with It?

-George T. Chronis





BY THE TIME THIS EXHIBIT'S UNVEILED, YOUR SOUL MIGHT BE ONE OF THE ARTIFACTS.

A mysterious, centuries-old Capricorn head has found a new home inside the famed Stevenson Museum. If you can't solve the puzzles surrounding it, your soul may soon join the exhibit.

Coming fall '97, Temüjin™ is the world's first game powered by Video Reality™ technology. It's a psychological thriller that will immerse you in 360° of completely seamless, incredibly realistic, motion picture-quality gaming.

For a free demo CD, visit us at www.southpeak.com.











Online-Game Connection

By Amy Crigger and Daniel Morris



DragonGard Empire Builder Empires Dawn Imperium, Junta Kinggom of Drakkar, Minion Hunter, Operation Market-Garden

Exclusives

Upcoming.

Drakkar It FiefQuest Search and Destroy Skulls Bones and Buccaneers War ords of the Apoca vose

Rates \$9.95, month

AOL keyword: WorldPlay



Highlights Baidles On ine Front Page Sports Trophy Bass 2 Heavy Damage MissionForce CyberStorm SET Shattered Light Spaces The Incredible Machine (TIM 3)

Exclusives

Upcoming Fantas, Adventures On the Flerce Harmon, Poxer

Rates \$1.99 hr after a offed free time

www.2am.com



Highlights

Allance & Defiance Animated Chess Backgammon Chain of Command, Checkers, The Invisible Hand, Total Avar

Exclusives:

Upcoming¹

Rates \$10 mg or \$30 to become a Founding Member

Blood Castles II, Claw Darkness Falls Descent Onine, Diable Dragon Dice Rednerk Rampage Rolemaster Magestorm Splatterpai Virtua Pool Marcraft

Exclusives:

All except Blood and Diablo

Caesar's Palace Virtual Casino. The Lost World Jurassic Park

Rates: \$1.95/hr with ads, \$2.50/hr ad free

www.mplayer.com



Highlights. Battleship Big Red Racing Blood C&C Red Alert Grush Deluxe Deadlock Diabio

Mech Warnor 2 Panzer General Online Only Quake Risk Scrabble Wardraft War Wind

Exclusives Quake Tournament Play, Q-Bal

Upcoming Chasm Dominion, M1A2 Abrams Outlaw Racers Reign of Heroes Star General AarBreeds Warlords II

Rates Free, MPlayer Plus \$29.95 yr for access to specia online tournaments and sponsored events

www.dwango.com

ABC Monda, Night Football, Blood G-NOME Her COPS

Microsoft Fight Simulator 98, Monster NetMech POD Quake Shadow Warnor Terracide

Exclusives None

Upcoming: CART Precision Racing, Crackerlack, Dominion, Total Ann h at on

Rates: \$7.95, mo. \$19,10 prs. \$34/20 prs. \$59,40 prs. \$ 99/hr through Internet Gaming Zone

Highlights. Backgammon



Exclusives: Outlaws X-Aing vs. TIE Fighte

Upcoming Age of Empires Baseba 3D Battleship, CART Precision Racing Close Combat: A Bridge Too Far, Fighter Ace if girt Simulator 98, Jedi Knight: Dark Forces I, Risk, Star Wars Rebeijen

Rates. Free except Fighter Ace (rates for this game have cot yet been determ

www.ten.net



Exclusives



Confirmed KT Dark Reign, Fa con 4.0, Jagged Alliance, Myth The Fallen Lords NASCAR Racing 2, Prev. Top Gun.

Aolfram Zero

Rates: Flat rate \$19.95. mo; hourly rate: \$9.95/5 hrs per mo \$1.95 each addt inn

www.gamestorm.com GAME STORM A r Warr or Allens Online,

CatchWord Classic Card Games, Harpoon Online, Multiplayer BattleTech Solans, Online Casino 2, Skent Death

Exclusives

Upcoming: Jack Nickjaus 4

Rates: \$4.95.mo

WORTHY GAME URLS

Feeling up for something a little more out of the way? Here are some of the "off-the-beaten Internet-path" sites where other readers are spending time. As always, submit your own faves to pcgamesletters@bcgames.com.

Clan Jade Lalcon (Mech 2

members.tripod.com/ ~allenbrittner/ClanBurrock2.html

One of the more elaborate Mech 2 clan sites around. Includes complete information on roster, affiliations. and league play

Ultimate Quake Page

www.comevisit.com/ultimatequake Featuring a unique blend of skin downloads, levels, and Nine Inch Nails appreciation

Bethesda's n-depth site for its experimental racing game

Dark Reign Command Center www.dark-realms.com/darkreign A one stop shop for Dark Reign info,

ncluding a humor page. How does one laugh in the face of monumental calamity and war? Easy

riot.lith.com

Monolith Games' new 3D action shooter is looking to build a following through an extensive on me presence. Their sharp site provides an inside look

As a cader you have the chance to train at the Academy.

As a pilot you have the chance to battle hostile enemies.

As a captain you have the chance to establish an alliance with aliens you don't really trust in order to save the universe.

Obviously, this is not a game of chance.

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FOR PC CD-ROM. Available late September. So purchase Forci II Alliance visit your local software retailer, or call 1-888-797-5867. Download ble demo available at www.ripcordgames.com









THE PLAYER



On The Player's mind this month is a rather depressing game-demo experience he'd like to relate.

You Can Keep a Good Game Down...

he following account is based on The Player's real-life experiences.

Everything you are about to read did in fact happen. Names have been omitted to protect the lobotomized. The Player doesn't think it's fair to knock a game or company until a product is on shelves and he's really had confirmation of his fears.

About a month ago, The Player received a call from a big game publisher that wanted to come up to San Francisco to demo an upcoming game. Turns out the title in question was a sequel to a wonderful strategy game that was near and dear to The Player's heart. So he immediately cleared his calendar and set aside a generous amount of time to look at the product.

The company and the game's designer arrived, and immediately The Player knew this visit would be different than last year's, when the same people came by to show the game that started it all.

A year ago, palpable excitement surrounded the crew as they set up the demo. A year ago, the game's designer simply couldn't stop talking about the game—how different it was from all the other real-time strategy games out there, and how deep and sophisticated it was.

This time around, the designer was nowhere near as animated. Yes, it was clear he still had a deep affinity for the game, but something was missing from him and his entourage: confidence.

A little subtle digging (yes, The Player can be subtle on occasion) revealed why. The cold dagger of reality had clearly been driven through the heart of a struggling product trying to establish itself as a franchise in the face of extremely stiff competition. The first game simply didn't sell well, despite the fact that it was a truly excellent, polished title that brought several unique features to the increasingly staid strategy genre—and despite nearly unanimous critical acclaim.

Why didn't it sell? Could've been a variety of reasons. Timing was certainly an issue—the game was released just after Red Alert, and it probably didn't have enough marketing muscle behind it to make it heard above the C&C din. In any case, the game's lack of financial success obviously had a major influence on the sequel's development.

When the designer showed us the first game, he continually said things like "No other game offers this feature!" or "This is a first for strategy games!"

He was right, too. Not so with the sequel. Now he kept saying things like, "All other games offer this, too." He seemed resigned, in fact, to be offering a eame much like every other in his market.

But what was truly depressing was that the designer and publisher appeared to believe the first game didn't sell well because it wasn't enough like its strongest competitor, C&C. And they were clearly endeavoring to "rectify" that this time around by eliminating many of the subtle touches and features that made their game

unique in the first place. A major effort was being made to dumb down the game, make it more simple and "easy to play," when sophistication and depth were its predecessor's strengths.

Simply put, this demo—as one of The Player's colleagues remarked—could be described as "Game X gives itself a lobotomy."

The Player doesn't believe this sequel's chances of success will be improved with a more simplistic form or by mimicking its competition. What's worse is that he's heard similar strategies from other companies since the time of this demo, which doesn't portend well for the industry's health as a whole.

The flood of good games during the fourth quarter is hard enough to contend with. Now imagine if all those games are the same. Is the real-time strategy genre becoming the Harlequin Romance franchise of the game industry? The Player hopes not.

But whose fault is it? The game developer for trying to make his game sell? The publisher for putting pressure on the developer to make its game more mainstream? Or is the fault ours, the gamers, for demanding more from a game, and then not taking advantage of it when it's delivered?

All of the above, The Player thinks. His advice to gamers: When you find a game you really like and know is a bit obscure, let your friends know about it. If enough of us do that, some truly excellent games may succeed that otherwise might receive lobotomies and dwell forever in anonymity. As always, send your thoughts and obscure, excellent game nominees to ThePlayer@pcgames.com.



(a)

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THE OPPONEN



Our own resident Quake Boy learns to die like an aviator-and like it.

BLADE

Come Out and Fly Like a Man

here was a time, not too long ago, when The Opponent was referred to around the office as "Quake Boy." Oh, did he like that moniker. The reason was fairly evident: Ever since the Qtest started, he'd been playing the game incessantly. By the release of the final version, there was no other game.

Of course, it was the deathmatches that really piqued his interest, and the hours spent with Quake paid off as all comers in the office (and in the beta stages of the online-service revolution) succumbed to his prowess. Sadly, the perils of his job require testing numerous other games, so sole devotion to Quake simply wasn't possible. His talents slipped.

But something odd happened to The Opponent. In the midst of a recent Quake resurgence, with all these other familiar games still offering tantalizing challenges against coworkers, something else emerged. After promising that he was into the idea without ever managing to get around to it, The Opponent finally joined the airborne brigade. He launched headfirst into Warbirds, ICI's tremendous online flight sim, and was blown away. He's still getting

Throwing yourself into the deep end of a game like Warbirds is a test of patience and the ability to think and react on the fly (so to speak). There are hundreds of pilots out there, many in squadrons who've been doing this for years and who know the game, how to fly, how

blown away. Actually, he's quite

enjoying getting blown away.

not to fly, and-most importantly-how to make a novice look really, really stupid. Services like TEN and Mplayer, with their

user-friendly lobby models, supply the backbone for a community of players (just call your room "newbies only" and you're likely to get players of a similar talent level-if you don't, leave and join another game). Warbirds' lobby isn't nearly as intuitive, but it makes up for it in camaraderie.

Now, The Opponent wouldn't normally consider himself the voice of reason in a community environment. He's not going to join a squadron and go to the conventions and do the whole community thing. But he was getting wasted by enemies before he could even get the damn plane off the ground, until someone offered the simple suggestion of starting from an airfield away from the main furball (see? he's even getting the slang down), taking off safely, and getting to the dance in his own sweet time. Guess what? He got off the ground safely, flew off in the totally opposite direction from the fight, worked out all those dials and control things, and then, armed with a ridiculous spattering of over-confidence, 3 headed into the melee.

About three seconds is his estimate for how long he lasted. It might have been four. Five, tops. All of a sudden the plane was in a nosedive, riddled with bullets, and the situation was looking hairy. And he crashed and burned. Lesson number one: Watch your six (which apparently means "use the rearview mirror" in pilot-speak).

Try again. This time, on reaching the battle, he was able to fly around for a while and even followed one plane, firing aimlessly (Quake-style) before taking another plunge into the drink. Lesson two: There are certain rules of engagement that need to be followed. Do some reading,

But you know what? It was great. There was none of this "What-ho, ginger" crap, or "You suck, weasel-breath"-even though it was patently obvious that he did indeed suck.

> Like Quake, other games are going to come along that badly limit time in the sky. But Warbirds 2.0 should be out by the time

> > you read this, and that's going to allow multiple players in one plane-so the pilots can pilot and the gung-ho loons barely able to get off the ground (like The Opponent) can man the guns and do the damage. And we'll be able to chat to each other about it all, and have fun.

The reason for the eulogy? There's a barrel-load of firstperson shooters coming along this holiday season, all vying for the Quake crown. The Opponent suspects that only Quake 2 will actually surpass

Quake, with only a Star Wars shooter (you know the

one) offering genuine consumer competition. The rest will do their thing, but gamers ought to be aware that there's a whole world buzzing up in the skies that offers such tremendous fun, it shouldn't be overlooked by the twitch-brigade.

So don't be put off by the perceived highbrow nature of the flight sim. Warbirds' WWII setting ensures that the action is intense, visible, and in your face (rather than the long-range, detached style of modern flight sims). The graphical detail may not put Quake to shame, but the latency issues are reduced, and there's a significant chance of getting a much more fluid rideand hence more continuous entertainment.

The Opponent will still be turning to Quake for his frag-and-giblet quota, but the skies are alive, and it's a welcome change.

Feel free to shoot PCGB (for PCG_Blade, of course) down in a Warbirds furball. Or send a more passive email to blade@pcgames.com.





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The Mercenary



Daniel Morris

So the CDA's been defeated, But what's a nascent entertainment industry to do about cries of obscenity and irresponsibility? Assistant Editor Daniel Morris offers a Swiftian compromise.

A Modest Indecent Proposal

ith the defeat of the Communications Decency Act, the victory cheers are still roaring up and down the World Wide Web. Certainly, the validation of the Web as a vehicle for free speech on par with the printing press means that the Internet is now-officially-a place to speak your mind without any more fear of reprisal than you'd expect from print publishing.

But there's still a major quandary. Computer gaming, long an entertainment ghetto, is creeping steadily, desktop by American desktop, to the status of mainstream medium. This progress is cause for celebration, to be sure. But it's also time for the industry to take stock of what being a mass entertainment medium means to the culture at large.

Namely, that little old lady from Dubuque is going to be shopping at Wal-Mart pretty soon for a new game for Little Tommy, and she may not like what she sees on the box.

The question of a ratings system for computer and console games isn't new. In fact, it's been a hotly debated issue for years. There are even two competing ratings systems. The Entertainment Software Ratings Board (ESRB) has rated more than 3,000 titles submitted to it by more than 200 publishers since its inception in 1994. You have the ESRB to thank for those blackand-white ratings stickers with K-A (Kids to Adults), T (Teen), M. (Mature), and AO (Adults Only) labels. The stickers are mostly applied to console games.

The other quasi-useful ratings system is the RSAC (Recreational Software Advisory Council), which shows up on Access' Links LS '98

box. The RSAC rating is derived from qualitative guidelines-for example, is there sex? Violence? Gratuitous sex? Gratuitous violence? (Links LS '98 gets a "Suitable for All Audiences" rating from the RSAC. How comforting-no streakers at these golf tournaments, we can assume.)

While neither system has made much of an impact on PC game publishing, that may change soon. Software companies intend to penetrate the home desktop market in numbers never before reached, thereby expanding the PC gaming market to a size comparable to the installed base of console gamers. Therefore, I won't be surprised to see major game publishers sitting down with the ESRB very soon to hammer out a set of "guidelines" for rating PC software.

The problem with any ratings system is that the guidelines for establishing ratings are nebulous at best. I took a quick trip to the offices of sister publication GamePro and asked editors what constituted an ESRB rating of K-A vs.

T, or M vs. AO. They were unable to venture anything more than an educated guess. And these guys are the console experts! One can only imagine the consumer's confusion when trying to differentiate between titles possibly containing objectionable material.

> I say forget the whole notion of a ratings system. Whether we're talking about movies, TV, music, or games, the definitions are too ill-defined and the definers too unrepresentative. How do a member of the Christian Coalition and a

member of Junior Anarchists of America interpret the same game bearing the same vague rating? They can't-their subjective values are too distant. So my answer is this: Forget the universal ratings system. Let the ESRB establish a Web site for any and all interested consumers who want to find out what other groups

think of a game. Let the Southern Baptist

Convention supply their own ratings guidelines right alongside the Church of Satan's. That way, consumers can decide which group's values they most identify with and trust-and make selections accordingly.

But, I hear you ask, how can watchdog/ review groups keep track of all these games? Isn't that the point of a watchdog agency-to do it for us?

Some say better them than the government. But it's still wasted effort. This has been proven by "safe surfing" software that blocks out sex-related Web sites along with worthwhile art and medical sites that just happen to include blacklisted words like "breast." And since you

can't get anything but vagaries from industry-appointed groups like the ESRB, you're in the dark anyway. You may as

well have a resource that simply lists what other people say about a game. Then you, the consumer, will have some tangible idea as to what to expect.

The federal government is looking into this kind of approach with its proposed PICS system, said to be a favorite of technoveep Al Gore. PICS essentially provides Web surfers with a list of suggestions and warnings from Everyday Folks and Organizations, which you can then apply to a personal evaluation of a site's merits and ills.

As our hobby matures, our means of rating its titles for the protection and awareness of concerned parties must mature as well. But there's nothing mature about applying a vague ratings system to the complex range of games presented by the PC platform. For publishers to adopt such a myopic code would be regrettable. Let the consumers make the value judgments for a change.



Who Wants Some Wang?

There revers than a linking skystraper

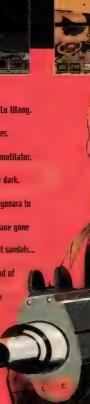


Shadow Warrior is here, to Wang.
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#1 Freak fragger. #1 Mutant mutilator.
#1 reason to be scared of the dark.
#1 Son-of-a-Bitch. So say Sayonara to
all the Ninja wannabes that have gone
before and put on your combat sandals...
Lo Wang is coming to the Land of
the Rising Sun to turn out the

The Zen is going to hit the fan.

lights. Shadow Warrior.

"There's no doubt that
Shadow Warrior
cremates the competition."
GameSlice Weekly





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FRESH FROM THE LREATORS OF DUKE NUKEM 30

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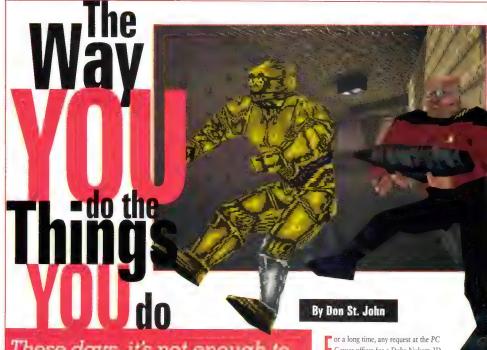












These days, it's not enough to just play a game; thousands of hardcore gamers want to make their own versions. Ever since Doom, companies have been giving you that ability in spades. Here's a look at the world of user-customizable games—why you hack them, and what you get in return.

or a long time, any request at the PC

Games offices for a Duke Nukem 3D

Dukematch was met with the response,

"How about Danzig with Bloodclot?"

If you think that doesn't exactly sound like a standard Duke level—or even like English—you'd be right. Danzig, a claustrophobic, frenetic map built by Duke fanatic Jay Scott, was among the first user-created levels to become truly popular in the Duke world. Bloodclot, a patch made by another Duke lover, added such nefarious characteristics as sound samples from Evil Dead 2, death screams, and the option to have your enemy burst into flames when his health fell below 10 or when he'd been peppered with red-hot lead. As much as we love the official Duke levels, there were times when only the two-deaths-a-second pace of Danzig and the incessant noise of Bloodclot would do.

Apparently, the same was true for thousands of you—and because of that, we're in a new age of games that you, Joe Gameplayer, can modify. No longer do you have to be stuck with whatever developers serve up. Instead, they're writing many of their games with open hooks that let you do your own levels, patches, and even full conversions—if you're willing to spend the hours of hacking time and, in some cases, are technologically savvy enough. Race tracks, deathmatch levels, role-

playing environments—they're all open for messing around with. And while that's hardly news, and hasn't been since the release of Doom in 1993, thus has really been the year user add-ons have come into their own.

There's always a reason

Why would someone sit for hours on end putting together their own levels? The reasons vary-compulsion, boredom with existing levels, interacting with friends, sheer fun, and ambition can all play a role. "Basically, I do this for fun, but it's also something I want to do as a job," savs Michael Clark, a UK native who heads up a collective called Inferno Interactive, Inferno's released some Dukematch levels and is putting together a Duke-into-Quake conversion and a Shadow Warrior total conversion. "It can be a good back door into software companies." That's not just wishful thinking: Richard Gray, who designed several Duke levels at 3D Realms and was part of the team that did the Scourge of Armagon Quake-level pack for Ritual Entertainment, began level life as a Doomlevel builder; and Steven Polge-creator of the infamous Quake Reaper Bots-was hired by Epic MegaGames to develop the AI for Unreal.

Almost always, though, it starts at the most basic level: Like a chef who learns how to cook because he likes to eat good food, game hackers take on their project because they want more game. One obvious benefit to modifiable games is that they often wind up enjoying an extended life span. To this day, old warhorses such as Civilization III and even the Dooms benefit greatly from the existence of new levels, and much of the 1996 crop of hot games is going strong for the

"If Quake time and parie the skill to ma

same reason.

itable, would anyone still be playing it?" asks Clark. "Not likelv; they'd have moved on."

There are games for which user input is almost intrinsic to the experience. How about custom decks for MicroProse's Magic: The Gathering? "It's

pretty basic to the game," says Aaron Mitschelen, who runs the Magic: The Gathering File Depot, a Web site deducated to the

exchange of custom, player-created decks.
"The deck builder is very simple to use, and
the decks that come with the game frankly
aren't very interesting. This adds some
excellent variety."

More often, though, it's simply a way for companies to pique extra interest in their games. For first-person shooters, it's almost

required these days to have user-input capability. Because the majority of them are based on either the Quake engine or Build engine—both designed as open environments—it's not too onerous to add map design. But plenty of

other games can rise out of a crowded pack by offering user modification as added value.



Although most of the games that offer modification have level or map builders included, that doesn't mean it's an easy task. Working with level builders or map editors for shooters takes a lot of time and patience; in Quake's case, it also takes the skill to manipulate polygons in a highly sophis-

> ticated manner (see Richard Gray's article "Design the Fault Line," February 1997).

Plus, more often than not, game developers provide little in the way of instruction when it comes to using supplied level-editors. For instance, working with the Build editor upon Duke's release was tricky until homemade guides began springing up on the Web. And Interstate '76 map builders had to wait quite

awhile for Activision to get that game's "asset bible" out to users.

Technical expertise helps. Kyle Lemke—who headed up a team that recently produced a total Quake conversion called Quake Borgs—says that knowing the advanced programming language C++ made programming in QuakeC (the offshoot language id Software developed to write Quake)

much easier than it'd be for the normal gamer. The result: a Quake world replete with cyborgs, robots, and other staples of the future. (You can find Quake Borgs on this month's PC

Not that it was simple. "[Borgs] got

bigger as it went along," he says. "It was a lot more work than I'd planned on doing. But I think it was definitely worth it."

The scope of such games often means that you may have one talent required to write a level or conversion—say, the program coding—but not others, such as the artistic or design skills. That's led to a lot of teams working on Quake- and Duke-based projects; they split up the work by expertise. Quake Borgs is a perfect example: Lemke handled much of the coding, while five other hackers handled such aspects as the map designs, textures, and weapons.

What results, besides a pleasurable play experience, is a camaraderie of a sort only possible in these Internet-ruled days, often crossing over national borders; in some cases, it has extended through several games. "It's a definite circle of people that I've met, and that's how we put Inferno together," says Clark. "I'm in the UK; the head artist, Roger [Tweedie], is up in Scotland, and a couple of the other guys are in Germany.

But we've been in touch for a few years now."

Beyond technological savvy, a good imagination doesn't hurt, either. Inferno's Duke Does

Quake hack is an attempt (though certainly not the first) to replicate the Duke characters and feel within the familiar Quake engine, and it's quite possibly the first to try to make all of Quake's levels as close to Duke's as possible.

Their drive is.

Then there's the plethora of skins available over the Net (many of which you see here); a twisted mind can devise almost any character, whether existing or original.

The games

games...and then there are levels,

add-ons, and total conversions

for Duke Nukem 3D and

There are levels for many

Quake. Counting them is like counting grains of sand on a beach—they proliferate on the Web beyond tabulation. Any Yahoo search of those

> games will turn up more levels and conversions than you could hope to play.

> Less likely, but just as fun, are levels for games that aren't first-person shooters. The variety is startling: People are into hacking games that might not strike you right off the bat as prime candidates—but with nice results. Take Interstate '76:

Activision's frenetic desert drive-and-shooter has already seen a batch of levels spring up, and not just of more deserts, either. You wanna drag? Try the Tallahassee Drag Strip at the Unofficial I-76 Homepage. For more extensive action, there's

Rage Country, a large and detailed map with a huge city, a battle bowl, off-road challenges, plenty of jumps, and more.

Papyrus, which developed the customizable NASCAR Racing 2 for Sterra On-Line, also plans to let players tweak its upcoming SODA Off-Road Racing. SODA (for Short-course Off-Road Driving Association, the off-road equivalent of NASCAR or CART) won't require so much hacking, either—you'll be able to shape the track

from an overhead perspective and drag and drop items such as puddles, oil slicks, and other obstacles right where you want them to fall.

Of course, strategy games have been likely candidates for new maps ever since the release of Civ II, and Command & Conquer and Warcraft II maps proliferate over the Net. More and more strategy games are including user customization, and it's an



attribute that
wargamers
are almost
coming to expect. And it's
not just maps, either: Games
such as GT Interactive's Total
Annihilation let you create and adjust unit
types and abilities.

One thing that user design does for strategy games is introduce a fantasy element. Impressions Software's upcoming Civil War General 2 will include a map editor that lets you transport existing scenarios to new locations, or even custom-design the number of units and quantity of armaments you'll have. "If you want to fight the Civil War in Boston, you could; there's no limit to where you can be," says Impressions' Carol Gunst.

Similarly, Interactive Magic is bundling an editor into Semper Fi, its upcoming Marines game, that will let you design terrain from scratch. You'll be able to build a landmass with varied topography, placing such environmental designs as jungle, forest, swamp, close brush, and even water for amphibious campaigns.



On Site

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Nonstandard, fantasy-based strategy titles provide even more opportunity for customization. Red Orb's WarBreeds includes a Windows 95-based map editor that supports imported art as well as customizable creatures. Because the game's creatures are crafted by genetic mixing, you'll be able to alter characteristics at the genetic level and come up with new breeds.

levels through its server.

Then there's Myth. This much-anticipated blend of real-time strategy and 3D medieval war action from Bungie will have a level editor for creating custom games. Bungie will

creating custom games, bunger win help you spawn a multiplayer game with your levels, too; the company's Metaserver will be able to distribute files and resources being used in a custom game to all of the players. Don't be surprised to see Myth maps proliferating quickly over the Net.

User customization has crept into flight sims, too: SU-27 Flanker has a huge following of scenario builders who swap missions over the Internet, and Sierra On-Line's upcoming X Fighters will sport a similar capacity.

But some genres are a bit more surprising. You wouldn't expect many sports games to be on the user-hackable list—there's only one way to do a football field, after all—but the striking exception is golf, where the course-design editor for Accolade's Jack Nicklaus Signature Edition Golf and Course Design package has proven quite popular. Hundreds of courses have popped up on the Web since the course editor's release. The game's next iteration, Jack Nicklaus 5, due at Christmas, will

upgrade the coursedesign utility in several



respects, including the ability to use playercreated art for objects, textures, and horizons, a "test hole" feature, elevation-control enhancements, a "forest creator," and animated objects such as birds and flags.

Even mass-appeal games can be messed with. Ever thought you'd be able to do your own version of a console game? Atomic Bomberman, the recent port of the Super Nintendo hit, lets you construct your own levels.

Plenty more on the way

The trend of letting users modify their games will continue, especially in shooterland. Given the innate openness of the Quake engine, expect many of the Quake-based shooters such as Half-Life,



Prey, and, of course, Quake 2

to have extensive level-creation capabilities. Ditto for the 3D Realms games based on Duke's Build engine; Shadow Warrior had players itching to add levels from the time the shareware was released, and with the full game out now, a Web search will surely pull up some serious levels. (Check in with us at www.pcgames.com—we'll be keeping track.)

Expect the whole genre of user-hackable games to only grow bigger. Interest among hard-core gamers continues to intensify, and gamers in general are coming to expect the option of tampering with their favorites. As one game developer concedes: "Customers want this. And we have to give it to them."







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Dungeon KEEPE HOW TOBE PALEFUL

By Rob Smith

You've got twenty levels and six hidden realms that you need to turn black and rancid before a final confrontation with arch-goodie The Avatar. Here's how to do it, in style.

Evil for Dummies

Okay, Keepers-in-training: There are many skills required to make a successful assault on the world, and some basic rules to live by. The most fundamental is to know your servants. While many should be treated with the contempt befitting their foot-soldier role, others need more kid-glove treatment—or a swift, spiked-glove backhand. Knowing which is which and who does what best is the key to successful demonic management. I've been fortunate enough to learn some of these techniques from my own boss...

Critter Management for Dummies



Imne

On most of the early levels, spend all your starting cash on extra Imps to speed the dungeon-building process. This cash is easily recouped with faster digging of the gold seams, but be sure to leave enough in the kitry to build the treasure room. Easily underrated, the Imps are vital to your success, so treat them well (well-ish, anyway; the occasional slap really does up their work rate, but they aren't hardy enough to take too severe a beating).

After your basic dungeon construction has been completed, throw as many



Imps as you can spare into the training room. If you aren't sufficiently prepared to take on any approaching heroes (check



the map for the white dots signaling their approach), dump Imps at any unfortified walls to secure your dungeon until you're ready to dig out. Higher-level Imps are also far quicker at taking over tiles and rooms; look at the health bar on a target room's flag to see how close you are to conquering it.



Flie

They're not likely to last long as dungeon-building grows, but they can serve an early purpose—scouting out the dungeon over areas of water or lava. It's easy to ignore Flies, but watch them. When flying around, if they come across an enemy Keeper's door, they'll start bashing it down, and this could adversely affect the timing of your planned strategy for that realm.

Demon Spawn

Get them training. They're far more effective at higher levels—as all creatures are—but they also turn into second-level Dragons on reaching tenth level. And Dragons are cool.

Bile Demons

Attracting them is a simple case of mechanics. These fat, flarulent creatures require a large lair and a large hatchery (25 tiles each). They're good foot soldiers, so developing an army of them is a good move.

Warlocks

Throw your first couple in the library to get research started on various spells and rooms. When they are joined by more, get them in training—the higher the level, the more powerful the spells they have at their disposal. A bigger library, in excess of 25 square tiles, is sure to attract a few, but a wad of cash in the treasure room also helps keep them focused. As such, treats like special cash handouts can help speed along their research process (and also save the time they need to go to collect their pay themselves).

If you uncover lava on a level, build the Dragon's lair there—the heat gives them a boost and makes them much happier (and they're finicky critters at the best of times).

Trolls

Their use in combat is limited, but they'll come to your cause with a Workshop of a minimum nine-tile size. After a few realms have been conquered, judge for yourself how useful doors and traps are. They're certainly hugely useful in multiplayer games, but in single-player, since you're generally the aggressor, these defensive features aren't always worthwhile. That said, if you know that a realm involves numerous hero attacks (check the mission briefings below), blocking off certain access routes and portals can buy you time.

Vampires

A graveyard full of bodies is one way of creating a Vampire. They can help with research in the library, but they don't get along with Warlocks, so make sure they have separate lairs. Of vital use in later levels is the scavenger room. Vampires scavenging for more followers can be critical allies, because they increase the attraction rate of your Portal. They're also immor-

tal after they reach fourth level, reappearing in their lair if they're defeated in combat.

Dark Mistresses

Create a torture chamber. Then throw the Mistress in and just watch—if you're into that sort of thing.



Ghosts

Created when tortured heroes die (so vou can accumulate a few), they can help the warlocks with research and also spot invisible enemies.

Skeletons

Created when prisoners die of starvation (so don't slap prisoners who only have one health, unless you need their cash). And hitting prisoners is wrong. Even if they are Fairies. Well, bashing Fairies is acceptable. In fact, bashing all heroes is perfectly OK.

Hell Hounds

You'll need a scavenger room to attract these lava-immune pets.

Horned Reapers

These PMS gals rock! The only way to attract them is by summoning them at a temple.

Sacrifice a Dark Mistress, Bile Demon, and Troll, and hey presto! Here's a Reaper. Keep them happy. They're violently moody, but when trained up a few levels they're hard as nails.

Dangeon Design con Dammies

Basic design involves five rooms: treasure, lair, hatchery, training, and library. Don't build them bigger than you need at the start. Even if some of the rooms are ready-made 5-by-5s, just create 3-by-3 areas untially; you can expand when cash



Following the tradition of the fantasy milieu, Dragons covet cash. You'll need a 25-tile-orlarger treasure room to attract them. They work well with Warlocks in the library, so balance your use of Dragons and Warlocks between research and training. When all the spells and rooms available for a particular level have been researched—you'll get a message to this effect—throw them all in the training room.

tober 1777 - V

and critter requirements permit.

Build the Treasure Room where the gold is first. Build several wherever you find gold so that the Imps don't waste time carting their cargo unnecessarily. A Lair and Hatchery should be next. The Training Room and Library are the final additions to a basic construction. While the Imps are digging out gold, get any creature you have into training; don't waste time.

Build a prison as soon as possible, then check the Beat Up rather than Kill option. A torture chamber should follow as soon as possible. Throw captured heroes between the two rooms and even offer them chickens in prison to help persuade them to your cause. If they die, you get a Skeleton or Ghost out of it, but a trained hero turning to the dark side is far more useful.

In realms where you face more than one enemy Keeper, Guard Posts can be crucial to success. Set them up at strategic points and keep them manned with multiple creatures to keep one flank protected while you plan an assault on the other. Bile Demons make good guards but will desert at mealtime, so make sure Guard Posts remain manned at all times.

If a room you take over from an enemy Keeper is surplus to your requirements, sell it and use the cash for...well, anything you need it for.

Spells for Dummies

Call to Arms is an effective method of congregating your forces in one area, so it can be more effective than the Guard Post. Cancel it when the threat ends, and keep an eve on the cash it uses up.

Heal is the most useful spell. Cast it most effectively by holding the mouse on a creature's icon in the battle-information window.

Lightning Strike is an obvious choice if you have the cash. Be very careful with aiming—you may need to lead your target, and it's an expensive thing to waste.

A Keeper with a tight concentration of creatures is vulnerable to a *Disease* spell. While expensive, if you cast it on the right creature, it can spread quickly and do plenty of damage.



Defeating the Realms



Evensmile

A simple opener. Tunnel to the Portal, build the basics (treasure room, lair, and hatchery), and then watch the map for the white dots tunneling in. There are just three heroes to deal with before beating up the Lord of the Land.



Cosyton

Basic dungeon design is enhanced by the Training Room. There's an extra treasure room to the southeast for your Imps to claim. The hero fortress is to the south. There are two waves of three heroes each: three tunnel from the west and the others follow shortly unless you head south to the fortress and flush them out.

Waterdream Warm

The hero fortress is to the south, so fortifying any rooms to the south may be prudent. Dig to the south gold seam, then to the Portal. Build the basics again, this time with a library so you get your first taste of Warlocks. Throw them in training. Look to the west (there's a square edge), where you'll find two skeletons stuck looking for a Keeper, stuck in a training room.



Expect two waves of six heroes each—plus the Lord of the Land—in the second assault.

Flowerhat

You're warned not to head north too soon; heed that warning, Build the dungeon slightly bigger-5-by-5 rooms-to attract more creatures. When you're ready, dig north. You'll uncover two enemy archers across the lava (so you'll have to have researched the Bridge). The locked doors to the left and right both hide six heroes, so be well-prepared with a minimum of fourth-level for most of your creatures. In the rooms to the right are a Steal Hero (which gives you a hero) and Increase Level bonus (which gives one level of experience to all your creatures). Hidden at the eastern end of the lava is another Increase Level bonus. North of the main hero fortress is another area with a couple of unaligned Spiders and a Transfer Creature bonus. This lets you select one creature that you can bring with you to the next realm. Choose wisely,

Lushmeadow-on-Down

Working fast is key—there's a prison for the taking in the middle of the lava north of your starting location. There's also another Keeper further north. This is a good example of when to spend the starting gold on more lmps to boost the building speed. Build a library before the training room to get Warlocks researching the Bridge. As soon as you have it, tunnel north and claim the prison and its occupants. There's an Increase Level bonus at the east end of the lava. If you've had a battle and lost creatures, the Resurrect Creature bonus hidden at the west end of the lava may be useful. Now head further north to take out the rest of the Keeper's rooms and critters. About 20 fourth-level creatures should be enough.

Snuggledell

Build the dungeon quickly; this level involves another race to the middle against the enemy Keeper located to the south. You need the bridge because you'll hit water. Try to open just one entry to the water; more than one gives enemy creatures more points of entry into your domain, and that could be trouble. Tunnel and build to the east entry to the central island and claim the torture chamber and Mistresses. The water also has a Make Safe bonus (all your walls are fortified instantly) and Transfer Creature bonus to the east. An Increase Level bonus is hidden at the west end of the water. All these tunnels provide entry points for your opponent, so a Workshop turning out doors to be placed at strategic points can help your defense while you develop a force to head south.

Wishvale

Resist the urge early on to create big rooms—start with 3-by-3s, although the rooms are prebuilt 5-by-5s. Tunnel west first to where three heroes lurk. If you hat this Keeper fast, he won't have time to forthy (which he will, given time). If he does, you just have to wait until he decides to expand, then jump in quickly and decisively. A Transfer Creature bonus lies behind the southwest corner of the gold seam.

The Keeper to the east has a trap-filled setup. Break through to his dungeon to the north and claim the Increase Level bonus. Keep an eye on the Imps as they claim the tunnels. The room in the Imps as they claim the tunnels. The room in the Imps are the door just south of this room. The Imps can then avoid most of the traps to claim the Resurrect Creature bonus. Make sure the Imps are well protected by your monsters—grab a handful of them and hold on until the heroes come out, then drop them on the nearest claimed tile so that they are on hand immediately. (Pull the Imps out of the fire before they get toasted.)

There's another Resurrect Creature bonus in the southern room. A level-four Lord of the Land comes out of the portal in the middle room.



Tickle

Don't runnel through the gold seam to the north too early: there are a bunch of Fairies waiting to fry you (and a bunch of Barbarians beyond them). Get extra Imps, have some of them build your usual dungeon setup, and send two or three off tunneling out the gold over the lava in the southeast corner. Demon Spawn and Hell Hounds are waiting for a Keeper to join, and there's also a

Transfer Creature bonus.

Tunnel to the northwest corner, where an open area conceals an Increase Level secret. To the northeast, straight edges indicate a hero fortress. It's guarded with a boulder trap, so drop your creatures in front of the middle magic door, then pick hem up as the boulder approaches and drop them again as it passes. It takes awhile to break down this door, but behind is a Secret World bonus.



Moonbrush Wood

Dig out the Temple north of the Portal. Three rooms surround it, each containing one of the ingredients to summon a Horned Reaper (Dark Mistress, Bile Demon, and Troll). If you choose to get the Reaper, use the three rooms to build its own larr, hatchery, and treasure room.

Take control of the area across the lava (several monks bar your way) to get access to the libraries in each corner. Both have very powerful heroes, including ninth-level wizards. There's a Resurrect Creature in the left room and a Make Safe bonus in the bottom right. Mine the gold question marks and build small treasure rooms nearby. A powerful Vampire lurks in the very middle of these gold seams. Each of the other three areas that you can uncover is populated by numerous powerful heroes—you'll need a significant force of midlevel creatures to get on top. The top left library has an Increase Level bonus and the top right a Resurrect Creature.

A prison and torture chamber combo will help your cause by turning any of the powerful heroes to your side. The gold in the bottom left corner opens a corridor leading to a Transfer Creature bonus. Further to the north in this complex is an Increase Level bonus. Beyond this is a very heavily trapped room with a Secret World bonus. Wait until the rest of the level is cleared before sacrificing the creatures needed to

allow an Imp to take control (this should be done in first-person).

Nevergrim

This level's different—an open area surrounded by lava. Normal dungeon-building applies, but plan ahead for space requirements—you have the real estate. As your Imps claim the land, there's a free Scavenger room to the east. Build a bridge across to the middle island as soon as possible to release the Flies to your cause. They'll help attract the five Dragons—who will also appreciate a lair on the edge of the lava.

Meanwhile, there's a race to get the two Increase Level bonuses that can be found in the middle of the land masses to the east and west. Construct a bridge from the middle island and, with extra Imps, begin the takeover. Have a handful of monsters ready to support them as they claim land. A two-pronged attack down the side land masses, building a bridge across the lava, is especially effective.

If you're really quick, there's a Transfer Creature bonus at the southern tip of the enemy Keeper's land.

Hearth

Four potential angles of attack from heroes make this one level where speed is of the essence. You begin with some troops, so get them trained. Buy Imps and have some mine gold to fund training, using the others to claim the corridors to the hero portals. A workshop would be useful—place doors as far away from your Dungeon Heart as possible.

To the northwest is a tunnel leading out to the water—there are two Resurrect Creature bonuses, a Transfer Creature, and an Increase Level in the corners out there. Two Increase Level bonuses are also secreted in an offshoot room that leads also secreted in the secrete room that leads also secreted in the secrete room that leads are the secrete room that leads are

from the western corridor (look closely—beware of the boulder trap).

As the waves of heroes begin, try to take one of them out quickly with all

your forces, possibly allowing another wave into your dungeon, then dump all your forces on them. This should work out fairly easily.

Elf's Dance

Bizarrely tough, depending mainly on how you deal with the horde of first-level heroes milling around behind the two doors at the south of the map. Buy plenty of Imps to keep the cash flowing (the thin seams make placing treasure rooms important—don't have the Imps traveling long distances).



Taking time to build a force strong enough to take on all the heroes will let the two other Keepers build strong forces. Try to lure out just a few heroes at a time by possessing one of your creatures, breaking down the door, and making a tactical withdrawal (aka running for dear life), then dump a stronger force on those tempted to follow. The purpose of heading south is to free the Vampires and get control of the graveyard. They'll prove useful against the other two Keepers, so wait until you have control of them before claiming the Increase Level bonus in the southeastern corner. There's also a Resurrect bonus in the southwest corner, which also leads to a tunnel that can get you round the back of one Keeper. (You'll find a Transfer Creature bonus in the tunnel.) Hitting this Keeper from behind helps avoid any doors he may have placed.

Now assault the Keeper to the east with everything you have left. Simple aggression works.

Buffy Oak

A ready-built dungeon helps, but you need to move fast to secure territory before the two Keepers combine their forces to attack. Four Dragons are wandering the lava outside your confines. Dig through the wall and try to use a Fly to attract their attention. Set them to work researching ASAP to get the bridge. Now get across the lava and claim the middle section fully; extra Imps make this task simpler.

An Increase Level at the west end of this middle section needs securing, and there's a Reveal Map bonus on the east side.

The blue Keeper to the left is likely to build one tunnel to the middle section. He breaks through quickly, so keep him from claiming territory by putting down a well-manned Guard Post. Green Keeper attacks from a couple of locations to the right side. Assuming the Guard Post is secure, concentrate your forces on taking out this onslaught.



It's likely to be a balancing act as power swings from side to side—perseverance is the key to success. Start claiming Green's rooms with a task force of Bile Demons (fifth level or higher). Remember to sell the rooms for extra cash for training.

Blue will have lost the impetus after his ally's defeat, so swarm him. If all goes according to plan, a Transfer Creature bonus may still be around at the southern tip of the map.



Sleepibungh

Tunnel across the bottom to the east to liberate a tenth-level Troll and his workshop. This is straight-

forward resource management. The threat of two enemy Keepers plus the heroes means you'll have to fight to attract creatures. Bigger, more efficient rooms will help you steal a large part of the more ster cache. Build a bridge across the lava and pick a dungeon to attack. Then do the other one!

Finally, dig north of the gold plot. Through the first door is a fairly powerful bunch of heroes. There's a portal behind the second door from which the Lord of the Land will appear with an honor guard. Kick his ass.

In the northwest corner, claim the tunnels to find a Transfer Creature bonus.

Woodly Rhyme

Be warned: this one's long and difficult. Dig the gold around your starting dungeon. There's also a gem seam in the far northwest corner. You'll want to start tunneling across to that outcrop in the northeast corner, which hides a prison and Bile Demon ready for your cause. The problem is that when you break through to the water, the occupants of the central hero fortress have a route in. They're tenth-level Samuraı and aren't to be taken lightly, so take some time to train creatures first.

If you have more than 30 sixth-level and higher creatures, get a bridge to the fortress and battle for



dear life. It's swarming with powerful heroes, so you really need a strong force. An alternative is to leave the prison for a while and carefully tunnel down the west side. When you hit water, there's a prison and 3000 gold in the western corner. Now take over this Keeper with all haste (and take the Transfer Creature bonus down the water channel curving to the west).

The hero fortress has a couple of treasure rooms, but be wary of the huge number of heroes and traps outside the magic door. Break this door down to reveal a room full of bonuses. The one of interest is the Secret World. Wait until you have defeated the other Keeper (by destroying his Dungeon Heart and taking over all the rooms) before sacrificing the creatures necessary to claim the tile with the vital bonus.

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Tulipscent

My personal favorite. It's a man-management test, as you begin with two Horned Reapers and a Warlock. Set up a lair, training room, and treasure room for each Reaper in those two sets of three rooms. Keep the Warlock in the northern portion-you need him for research, Getting a prison is vital, as the heroes begin coming thick and fast. Tunnel out to the west to uncover a Samurai and Wizard for your cause. Beware of the boulder traps that cover the free Chicken Spell and the Transfer Creature bonus (wait to use it-you lose the creature selected immediately, so bide your time).

Heroes tunneling tracks should be followed to their source, which involves several waves of heroes coming through the portals to the east and northeast. Make sure that those Reapers have been trained and can be supported by Heal spells-they have to do a lot of work on their own. The Resurrect Creature bonus in the north could be vital if you've lost one of the Reapers.

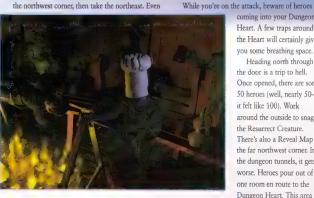
Go through the doors to the south and begin claiming territory; an invisible Imp is ideal for this, but back it up with a Guard Post or Call to Arms right through the two doors. A prison and torture chamber combo can supply a backup of converted heroes should either of your Reapers cop it. There could be six or seven waves of mid- to high-level heroes, so keep mining gold to support training costs.



Minthshine

Possibly the fastest dungeon to complete if you've transferred a powerful creature (such as a high-level Reaper or the tenth-level Samurai) from Tulipscent. Claim the south portal, then dig north to the second portal. Tunnel further north to uncover a treasure room and prison with two archers. Build the basics just to ensure some creatures are coming in; fast work to the four corners will end this quickly. Tunnel through to the open channels. Claim them down to the southeast corner. Have your Samurai batter the door, destroy the heroes, and send in the Imps to claim the portal. Remember to pick up the Secret World bonus.

Repeat this for each corner, but start to the west where several dwarves defend a Multiply Creature bonus (which doubles your force). Now head to the northwest corner, then take the northeast. Even



when you have control of the hero portals, they can still emerge-and they do, so be careful of overextending yourself. The southwest hero fortress is where the Lord of the Land appears from-and he comes with pals. You'll need the foot soldiers to take on the first wave, but ninthlevel heroes, hopefully captured and turned to your side, will tip the balance in your favor.

Blaise End

Get set for the long haul with this expansive realm. Speed is of the essence-four groups of heroes are heading in your direction the moment you begin construction. Attract Bile Demons and Warlocks as soon as possible, and get them training. As soon as you're done building your dungeon, create Imps to fortify it. This lets you choose the heroes' point of entry/exit. Try to work up the eastern side of the dungeon to attract the unaligned Bile Demons in

Break out the floating skeletons and pals from the enclosed areas through the gold seams. Be very careful going up through the middle. You can capture a Steal Hero bonus, but it evidently alerts the local heroes-they come from all angles. Take on the witches to the west, and you'll claim another Steal Hero bonus, which will help tip the balance.

> coming into your Dungeon Heart. A few traps around the Heart will certainly give you some breathing space.

Heading north through the door is a trip to hell. Once opened, there are some 50 heroes (well, nearly 50it felt like 100). Work around the outside to snag the Resurrect Creature. There's also a Reveal Map in the far northwest corner. In the dungeon tunnels, it gets worse. Heroes pour out of one room en route to the Dungeon Heart. This area is

also very, very heavily trapped (and guarded). You'll need the biggest force you've assembled so far to even get to this point. The death toll will make grim reading (unless you plow through in the end; then it's celebration time).



Mistle

The dungeon design has been virtually taken care of; you just need to use those highly trained Imps

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to claim the rooms for yourself. There are enough spares to shape the format to your own evil design. Don't head north yet, because there's work to be done to the east. Sacrifice the creatures needed to summon a Reaper. The Reaper can guard your Imps as they claim the bridges over the water and lava. It's easy for them to get fried by the Fairies, the Treatcles, or the Monks on this narrow route. The rewards at the end are one Resurrect Creature

and a gem seam (build a treasure room nearby).

Now head through the doors to the north. You can pick up a few spell specials along the way, but the route leads to a raging battle with over 20 heroes in the northwest corner. This may already have taken some time, so the Destroy Walls spell bonus

(through the prison, avoiding the boulder traps)

Stick a Guard Post or alarm trap wherever

will be useful as you tunnel east. Follow the wall around (and use Sight of Evil) to locate the Dungeon Heart. If you're fast, the walls won't be fortified; otherwise, sound the horn and bring down the walls. Many high-level skeletons guard this area, so be prepared for a long battle before turning to the Heart.

Skybind Trill

The final showdown. The Avatar himself awaits. This is going to be one very, very long, arduous battle with a phenomenal number of casualties, as all the beasts in hell rain down on this paragon of virtue. Cool!

Build quickly, but make sure you head east to mine the gold and gems. Keep that cash flowing. Train all creatures hard—really make them sweat. Past the gems, there are two Increase Level bonuses. Collect them when you've already attracted a bunch of creatures. There's a way across the water (although there's no bridge option in this level), so tunnel across to the small complex and collect the other two Increase Level bonuses.

Creatures who can walk over lava— Reapers, Hell Hounds, Dragons, etc.—are vital to

this whole plan, so build a prison, torture chamber and scavenger room. Try to summon a couple of Reapers. When you get across to the central dungeon, taking it over is relatively

painless. Make sure you pick up the Increase Level and

Resurrect Creature bonuses before heading to the Avatar's prison cell.

Here it gets tough: The Avatar is one hard dude. He's surrounded by lava, so you'll need to send in Reapers, Hell Hounds, and Dragons. To take him out, you'll need roughly four tenth-level Reapers, 10 tenth-level Hounds, and 10 tenth-level Dragons. This force can be supported from a distance by powerful Warlocks. Frequent and liberal use of Heal spells on your creatures and Lightning Strikes



on The Avatar are also needed, so make sure that there's plenty of cash in the bank. Pull out any creature on the verge of dying—it's worth regrouping for a new assault if things go sour, though keep in mind, The Avatar heals himself regularly.

Possess a creature to go beyond The Avatar's cell and uncover the rest of this area (how do you get Imps across there to claim it for yourself?). Managed to beat up The Avatar? Congratulations. But it ain't over 'til this fat fighter's fried. His goodly minions resurrect His

Lordshipfulness and join him in a final assault. Remember the count needed to take on The Avatar on his own? Double it, minimum. Heroes come pouring out of every orifice,

spreading your forces very thin. It may be a good idea to just head back to the sanctity of your fortified pad and wait for them to come to you. In the open, The Avatar's strength of numbers is overwhelming, so make sure the battles are

waged where you want them (in locations where their numerical value doesn't count for so much). Keep those Imps working on the gems to supply the cash for spells.

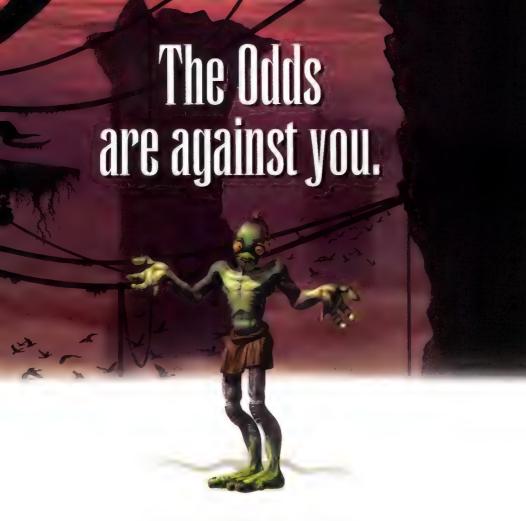
There's The Avatar—send in

the heavy artitlery.

Survive all this lot, kill the Avatar, and it's all over except for the concluding animation (which is well worth the time and effort).

Congratulations, fine Dungeon Keeper, you are, officially, true evil.

bpotted what's missingl Yep, the solations to the Secret Worlds (all six of them) are hidden on our Web sites www.psgms.com



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ODDWORLD: ABE'S ODDYSEE

GAMING GETS ODD THIS OCTOBER















By Jason D'Aprile

It figures.

The last gaming genre to make it online is the one everyone's been waiting for Sports gaming is finally finding its way onto the Internet and online-gaming services, often with some ingenious ways to stimulate head-to-head competition. Here's where to choose up sides and play some ball.

Internet gaming going on in the industry, there's been one particularly noticeable gap. After all, we've got first-person shooters galore, real-time strategy en masse, simulations coming out of our ears—virtually every game genre under the sun. Except sports.

Where are all the Internet sports games? Have the gridiron and beloved green diamond been so overtaken by nameless marines and aimless little warring units that they've been forgotten? Is golf really the only ball to hit the virtual green fields?

Well, not for long, because sports gaming is finally starting to come into its own over the Net. Admittedly, golf is likely to be the most prevalent sport for quite some time. But what's been the holdup? While some producers have been hesitant to move into the Internet gaming arena with their upcoming and current titles, others, like Sierra and ABC Sports Interactive, are jumping right in and adding Internet options to the majority of their titles. Even EA Sports—one of the kings of the

sports-game hill—is bowing to the reality of the Internet with its recently released PGA Tour Pro and its upcoming Madden NFL '98.

Are basketball and football really that much harder to make work over the lines than Quake? It would seem so. In fact, when that question is asked of the many sports-related companies, they respond identically, almost word-for-word: "The latency issues that plague today's Internet are simply too great to allow for the fast, real-world action of a game like hockey, basketball, football, or even baseball."

"For online gaming, the hardest thing possible to do is a fighting game," says ABC Sports Interactive's Bernie Yee. "After that, a close second is a game like football or basketball. Right around 100 or so milliseconds, you start noticing lag, but it's not even so much the latency, but the variability of it that's the problem. If we could count on a 150ms to 200ms [latency], as some online-gaming networks are claiming to approach, we wouldn't have as many problems."



cally simpler to run over the Net. "It really boils down to the fact that games like Duke and Quake are see and shoot games, in the sense that you're really passing back and forth a whole lot of nformation. You can do a lot en interpolation of what you think is going to be occurring, and if it's a little bit off, you can correct for it later," says Andrew Johnston of WizBang!, maker of HyperBlade and Microsoft's upcoming Baseball 3D, "If you're doing a real fast-paced action game, faster than Quake, where you really have to keep very intricate tracking of exactly where all the ttems are, then the whole networking issue starts to fall apart. [These games] work great on local-area networks, but over the Internet the transfer delays just start to really kill you."

David Grenewetzki, Accolade's executive vice president of product development, explains it this way: "Basically in sports, you're controlling a body, which is something that you have a lot of experience with, as opposed to driving a rocket or something. We know exactly how that's supposed

to feel and move and

interact, and it

makes you particularly sensitive to latency issues. And because sports are ubiquitous and everyone understands them, plays them, and knows most of the rules, it's not one of those things where we can invent fiction to hide the limitations of the system."

Adapting

So, does this mean that sports games are out for Internet play? Not by a long shot. But

it seems likely that they'll be a different sort of gaming experience than sports gaming has traditionally been. Most agree that given enough research and clever programming, online play is definitely possible.

Certain types of sports gaming, of course, can work well over the Net. For instance, Internet gaming is a golfer's paradise: Virtually every golf title released recently either has a direct Internet play option or some Internet-related functions. The advantages to playing golf over the Net are obvious: Latency issues are irrelevant since players go in turns, and they can compete any time regardof the weather.

wariety of golf games available that support Internet promeans that no matter what your favorite PC gotte de is, you can almost assuredly play it online. According recently went into beta testing for the online-only on of its popular Jack Nicklaus title, and Mplayer will bringing the highly acclaimed Links LS to its gaming network, Both EA Sports' PGA Tour Pro and Sierra's Front Page Sports: Golf have exceptionally simple Internet gaming options, connecting the player to a server where they can join or host games easily. Of course, Microsoft Golf can be played through the Internet Gaming Zone.

> is also bringing its 3-D Ultra Minigolf to its own free Sierra Internet Gaming System, on the company's Web site.

For the lighter-hearted golf player, Sierra

The other major Internetready sport is racing. Admittedly, most of the racers available for Internet play aren't the most realistic sims, but the selection is impressive just the same. The premier nonreality-based PC racing title, POD, is well into its beta for PODnet, which lets players link up with others around

If it were the '70s, we'd call these "trash sports." Whatever the name, though, there's a good batch of games that mix sports with futuristic combat and offer some appeal to avid sports gamers. MegaMedia's Crush! Deluxe offers a turnbased, sci-fi alternative to normal sports gaming and is playable through Mplayer. Also, Rocket Jockey finally got patched awhile back and now has built-in Internet play as well. (No word on whether it'll hit the HEAT network yet, though.) HEAT has stripped Viacom's first-person shooter DeathDrome down to its core and made it multiplayer-only and exclusive to the site. The game is built to support up to eight players and will be available in both demo and full versions. And for those of you who are fans of paintball but don't like actually getting popped with those pellets, there's always Splatterball on Engage.

the world and can work remarkably well. Ubi Soft's next big racer, F1 Racing Simulation uses the POD engine), is expected to har much the same multiplayer options when it's released at the end of the year. By The Racing is on Mplayer The works great and is well worth checking out. Accolade says that its upcoming Test Drive 4 (now going back to the series' ultra-sports-car roots) will support two and possibly four players over the Net, as will Microsoft's Precision CART

> Racing. ASC Games plans to enable Internet





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GAME...

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It's not always sunny on the gridiron — battle it out in snow, sleet, and rain. You'll have to adjust your gameplan to win.



Build a football dynasty like Dallas or San Francisco. Draft, trade, and manage players throughout entire careers!

- Advanced A.I. with team specific styles and coaching strategies
- Intense multi-player action using the Gravis Grip Multi-player adapter
- "Time Travel" with teams to create fantasy matchups
- Action and Coach Mode play



- 20-man rosters require most of your players to play both offense and defense. Get ready to use Dan Marino as a defensive back or Junior Seau at running back!
- The football is larger and harder to throw. Do you take a chance on the pass or grind it out with a running attack?



- Play a little rougher on the receivers. You can hit them anywhere on the field until the ball is thrown...and it's all legal!
- Players like Dick Butkus ruled the gridiron, paving the way for the modern-day player.



- Rules favor the running game.
- Goal posts were placed in the front of the end zone. The "Post" pattern was commonly used to run defenders into the posts for an easy touchdown reception.



















Is one of the few enlineonly golf games out there.

play in its new off-road racer, TNN Motor

Sports HardCore 2, and for some dirt-track racing now, Microsoft's Monster Truck Madness is a great choice. ABC Sports Interactive is bringing its racer, ABC Sports Indy Racing, to Mplayer, and it will have built-in Internet play as well.

Sierra's NASCAR Racing 2, easily the most impressive and ambitious effort in Internet racing, can be found on TEN. TEN isn't simply adding the game to its list of playable titles; it's coupling with the official NASCAR group to make the online version of NASCAR 2 into a truly competitive, realistic tournament. Expect prizes and NASCAR celebrities popping up on TEN to support and

EA Sports' PGA Tour Proeffers one of the pleet internet-goods biterfaces of any golf gome.

> promote this new direction in Internet gaming.

Growing
the goares
Racing and golf

aside, the Internet is finally starting to

show some appeal for fans of other sports as well, albeit not in the way that the more action-oriented player might like. Still, developers are looking at other ways around lag. There are two major baseball games in development that plan to offer Internet play right out of the box—Accolade's Hardball 6 and Microsoft's Baseball 3D. As of press time, these titles will offer two-player support over the Internet for pitching and batting,

leaving fielding to the AI. According to Accolade, Hardball 6's Internet mode may end up as purely a coaching mode, but this still hasn't been decided.

Football should become more prevalent as well. Already available for football fans is Sierra's Front Page Sports: Football Pro '97, which supports coaching mode through the SIGS network and contains an easy-to-use interface for accessing the Internet play features right from the main menu. Meanwhile, ABC Sports Interactive has two football games, based on the same engine, that will come equipped with Internet play options: ABC's Monday Night Football '98 and ABC Sports College Football: Heroes of the Gridiron.

However, instead of using the action mode, the games' Internet play is being designed as a head-to-head coaching game. Essentially, this brings it to the level of a more turn-based strategy sports

game—you pick your plays and watch as the AI carries them out. ABC says the games will have remarkably accurate player behavior that will make the teams in the game act very similar to real-life teams. The company is also toying with the interesting concept of one-sided action-based play: The player on defense would call his play, for example, and the offensive player would then be able to play in action mode as the AI acts out the defense. Such methods may provide a suitable solution to latency issues, but their success will the act of the play in the sact of the AI play. Both tittes are an example the August to mid-September.

All of the ABC Sports tules should be up on Mplayer as well, due to a recent leaf between the two. "We hope to do something with them that's sort of like an online league," says Yee. "The thinking is that if we can't provide action mode, then let's provide other stuff—the community-building elements



www.ten.net



that will make people really enjoy and continue to want to play Monday Night Football. Sports games have a great potential to bring people in."

Another football game coming to Mplayer and the Internet is a classic of the genre—Madden NFL '98. Although Madden ships this month without online capabilities, a post-Christmas add-on will add "Dynamic Coaching Mode," offering what EA calls "windows of opportunity" to change or modify your play 1300 till be able to snap the ball, pick primary receivers, etc.). The pack will also add new features to the play editor and allow gamers to better design custom plays for the Internet. EA Sports is planning to incorporate a huge dynamic league-handling system for players to compete against each other; it'll include ranking tables and game scheduling for more official competitions.



Not Your Average Ballgame

Some offbeat sports are finding their way to the Net, too. Blue Byte (maker of Extreme Assault) has an impressive-looking tennis offering in the works that it plans to make playable over the Internet in a big

way. The game, as yet unnamed, will introduce Blue Byte's own Internet



gaming server, and the company plans to hold multiday tourna-

ments and provide a ranking system for players. For all you bowling fans, ASC Games' Ten Pin Alley has been out for a few months now and comes with built in Internet play.

Then there's fishing yes, fishing. Sierra's Trophy Bass series is, believe it or not, one of the company's

biggest sellers, and Trophy Bass 2 has excellent Internet support (again through SIGS), allowing you to hit the ponds with a multitude of other players. Its upcoming fly-fishing variation of the title, Trophy

Rivers, will support play through the SIGS network as well. ASC Games will have Internet play in its 3rd Annual TNN Outdoor Bass Tournament; it'll even support force-feedback joysticks, so you can feel that rod tug.

Sierra is also working on a skiracing title, Front Page Sports: Skiing, which will support Internet play, although players will likely need to take turns racing rather than skiing the same hill simultaneously. SegaSoft's 3D Tabletop Sports is a series of six small games—Foosball,

Power Hoop A. Hockey, MAD, Ice Duel Hockey, and Draw Pay Fay Far. 81, a football card game—plavable through its HEA inetwork. And while Engage hopes to have several sports offerings by Christmas, the venerable Virtuals gold is cur-

rently the only true spot crelated game that can be found on that pay for-play service.

Getting there

Slowly but surely, sports gaming is arriving on the Internet, and as technology improves, the choices for sports gamers will continue to broaden, even though it might take a little longer than most of us would like. "In 1997, we saw a dramatic jump in the quality of games. It seems as if sports will catch up next year, and there will probably be a lot of opportunities for companies to get into online sports to get into online sports.



gaming then," says Cal Morrell, senior sice president of business development at Engage. "The next rev of products will likely have Internet in mind, as opposed to the LAN play that older and current titles were built with." On top of that, companies like Microsoft, Accolade, and Sierra, among others, have plainly said that they are committed to Internet play in some form with all their new titles, but that the current latency issues will likely continue to cause problems with development on all fronts.

"There's a lot of excitement about Internet gaming, but I think the transport delays and latency issues are going to plague us for the next couple years," says Johnston. "There's a lot of things you can do if you sit down and really think about what's going on in the interaction of the game—what can I ignore or update less frequently—and you might be able to do some pretty elever things. I don't think we'll see a whole lot of fast action games where everything is in sync, though, and I'm not convinced that anyone is going to be able to do a really fast-paced close quarters action game. I'm hopeful that in the next couple of years it might become more of a reality, but I would be surprised to see somebody do it right now."



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- Fly single missions for quick action or select Campaign play for a full tour of duty.
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- ♣ The Dynamix Mission Builder™ allows players to completely customize their missions.
- Dynamic's revolutionary new ACT AI^{co} system recreates the skills, tactics and personalities of historical and non-historical pilots with unbelievable realism.



The Plane Paintshop™ allows players to customize the colors, insignias and look of their planes, using either provided patterns or by importing artwork of their own from any standard paint program.







A new perspective on 30 action from the creators of Novetic and Hexas."



6 unique multiplayer games for up to 8 players, including Assassin, Arsenal, Kill at Will.



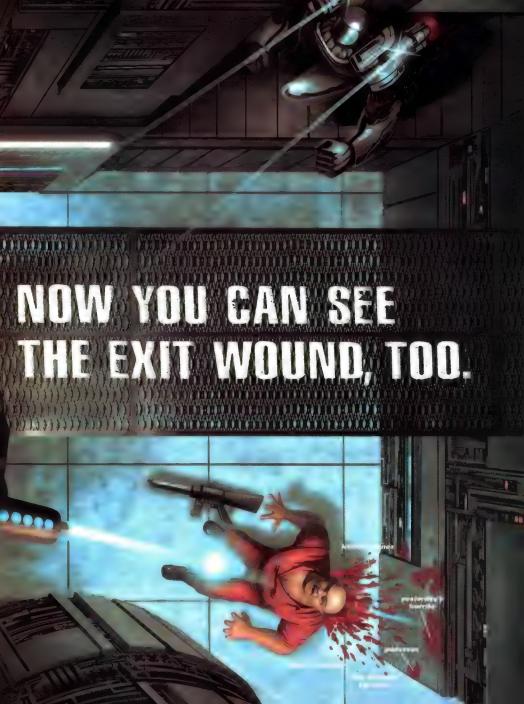
22 twisted enemies, each with unique combatbehavior, plus 21 bone-shredding weapons.



20 non-linear territories: no set path; explore different territories before completing previous ones.

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For games we've rated as an A or A- over the past year, admittance to the Best of the A-List is the ultimate honor; if it's on this list, it's not just great, it rocks. Serious gamers will want all of these titles in their collections.

Civilization II (MicroProse)

Comanche 3 (NovaLogic)

Command & Conquer: Red Alert (Westwood Studios)

Daggerfall (Bethesda Softworks)

Diablo (Blizzard Entertainment)

Duke Nukem 3D (GT Interactive)

Dungeon Keeper (Electronic Arts)

FPS: Baseball Pro '98 (Sierra On-Line)

Links LS (Access Software)

Lords of the Realm II (Sierra On-Line)

Master of Orion II (MicroProse)

MechWarrior 2: Mercenaries (Activision)

MDK

(Playmates Interactive)

The Neverhood (DreamWorks)

Pro Pinball: Timeshock! (Empire Interactive)

Quake (GT Interactive)

Settlers II: Gold Ed. (Blue Byte)

Syndicate Wars (Electronic Arts)

Twinsen's Odyssey (Activision)

X-Wing vs. TIE Fighter (LucasArts)

WHAT WE'RE PLAYING

Yes, the PC Games editors play tons of games, but there are some we've stuck with beyond the call of duty. Here are the five games we've been playing the most over the past month.

Shadow Warrior



3 Links LS 1998

Need for Speed II **Dungeon Keeper**

HOW WE RATE GAMES

ere at PC Games we use a letter-grade system to rate games. Everyone who's gone to school knows what our grades mean without needing an in-depth explanation or clever chart: an A+ is the best score possible and an F is a complete bust. To give you a better feel for the overall quality of a title, we rate each game in six key areas. We also select a Game of the Month for each issue.

GAME of the MONTH: The PC Games Game of the Month is the one title among the month's releases that stands out from the rest. It's generally the best overall game of the month, although occasionally a game will warrant this honor despite its not being rated as highly as some other games because it's a standout in one or more areas.

GAMEPLAY: In a nutshell, how much fun is it to play? This takes into account the quality of the game's interface and control scheme.

GETTING STARTED:

How much reading, studying, and hardware-tweaking are required before you can start to have fun? (The less the better.)

GRAPHICS:

How advanced and attractive are the game's visual elements, and how well do they serve the game?

SOUND CHECK:

How good are the game's sound effects and musical score, and how well do they serve the game?

OVERALL GRADE:

Taking everything into account, how strongly do we recommend the game for purchase?

MULTIPLAYER:

How much value will you get from the game's multiplayer element, if there is one? (N/A = not available) This takes into account ease of multiplayer setup. An independent rating.

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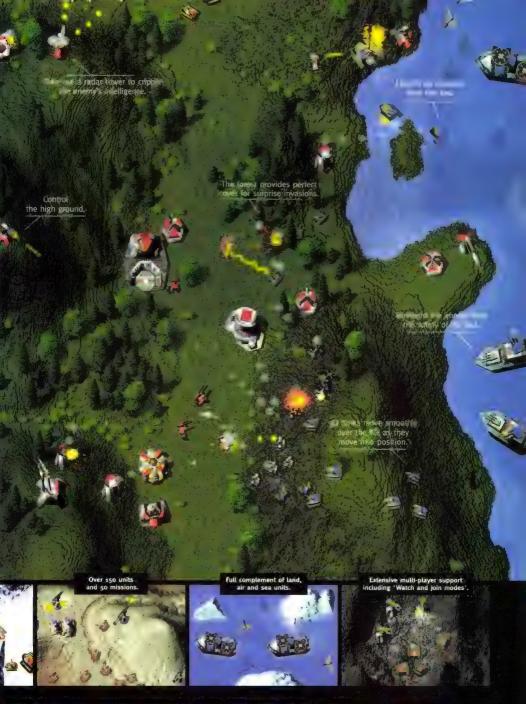


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Redline: The Publisher's Perspective

By Rob Smith

ave you ever stopped to consider how a game actually gets to be on the shelves? What's involved? What does it actually mean when a publisher signs a deal with a developer?

In game publishing, there's an extraordinary background process in marketing and sales that works to ensure quality control, maintain corporate direction—and, of course, turn a profit, PC Games paid a visit to Redline's publisher, Accolade, to quiz company President and CEO Jim Barnett, Director of Product Marketing Neil Johnston, and Product Marketing Manager Steve Allison about this process, which is largely unknown to gamers.

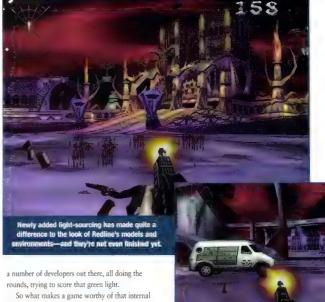
"I don't think the most extensive arrucle in the world will make consumers or even developers understand the behind-the-scenes process," says Barnett. This naturally implies a huge effort, confirmed by Accolade's count of at least 20 people supporting Redline in sales, PR, and marketing.

Where it all begins

Redline's producer at Beyond Games, Clark Stacey, describes taking a game concept around to publishers as "a process better imagined than witnessed." It's tough on publishers too. Up until two years ago, when the 13-year-old Accolade relaunched itself, it was receiving 10 to 20 pitches a week for consideration.

"We've intentionally been publishing less and less," confirms Barnett, "so we'll release six franchise titles this year, and then eight or nine next year. But we still get five to ten ideas pitched a week, of which one or two may progress to the internal assessment program." Evidently, there are





So what makes a game worthy of that internal assessment? Barnett explains: "Talent of the development team is critical. That could be based on a track record or an obvious talent for innovation, which is where Beyond Games fits in." Fitting into a corporate strategy, such as Accolade's bent toward action-filled games, also helps.

"The final critical factor is game design. Developers present anything from a five-page design document to a 30- or 40-page proposal and can include storyboards or concepts created in HTML. What matters then is the essence of the game: Is it going to be fun?"

Building franchises

The franchise concept is also vital. As Accolade works on Hardball 6, Jack Nicklaus 5, Deadlock 2, and Star Control 4, it looks like an attack of sequelitis. "That's not the case," explains Johnston. "Franchises are important, but we don't do kneejerk sequels....The internal belief is that a sequel

needs to be more than twice as good as the original to sell twice as many copies. Deadlock 2 wasn't quite that standard, so it's gone through three different steps to get it to the level we need it to be."

The multiplayer and online explosion has also made an impact on Accolade's corporate strategy—a common trend among publishers. "Multiplayer options are a 'must-have' in any game we ship," Barnett explains. The whole franchise-development concept fits well with multiplayer elements—gamers who play online talk about those games and, more unportantly, mention them by name. "When people talk of golf on the PC, we want them to be playing a game of Jack Nicklaus," Johnston says.

"Marketing is also expected to be involved in game design, embodying segments of the market. We involve marketing because we want to rather



than because we have to," adds Barnett. Because all the Accolade staff are self-confessed, dedicated gamers, this isn't as frightening a statement as it may first seem. "We try to be one of the customers," Allison concludes.

As the developers crunch to hit their milestones, the marketing department also faces deadlines to deliver such goods as box specs. "It's all designed to build the hype to a crescendo roughly four weeks prior to launch," Johnston says.

The green light

After a proposed game passes the internal meetings involving Accolade's product development and marketing senior management, the project is "greenlighted." At this point a contract-structured to supply the developer with advances as it reaches



REDLINE TIMELINE

rake in upon release.

Now the initial design doc is turned into a full 100- to 300-page proposal that goes into the game's story and background. In Redline's case, it also sketches out some of the initial missions. The next, technical milestone is to get an engine prototype up and running. Then comes the first playable code, which is a part of a level that includes some of the final art and the main character-providing an essence of what gameplay will be like. At each milestone, the progress must be OK'd by the internal Accolade meeting groups.

At press time, Redline is about to overtake the next milestone-the first mini-game. At this stage, the development team must prove that the game will be fun and that it has near-final art and Al in place. Even at this stage, there's a lot of ironing out to do. As a result, Redline has slipped from its scheduled November release.

Lies, damn lies, and ship dates

There's nothing more frustrating for gamers than to hear that their much-anticipated next purchase is delayed, but it's a fact of gaming life. It's happened to Redline, which at least has given us the chance to ask why. Although the game showed very favorably at E3, Accolade had decided beforehand to allow the development team three more months.

"While things were looking good, there was unanimity that Redline wouldn't be ready for its November ship date with the quality we're expecting," Barnett concedes. "We realized that we had just



something done on a whim. Expectations and tight schedules make achieving all goals right on time very tricky. For the publisher, helping the developers along is key, be it in time, understanding, personnel, or a plain kick in the butt.

So how does this affect "the deal"? If a publisher wants changes made to the original design doc, then they will negotiate further advances with the team to make these adjustments. "If the slip is because the developers aren't pulling their weight in certain areas, we enter into negotiations over advances," Barnett says ruefully.

The bottom line

Game publishing becomes more expansive and expensive each year, making it a much bigger deal to get a game from concept to shelf. Games today take roughly two years to develop and cost about \$2 million, and therefore need to sell over 100,000 units to turn a profit.

For Redline, these figures are close: The development budget will come in between \$1.5 and \$2 million, and Accolade will invest from \$800,000 to \$1 million in marketing to ensure that consumers are suitably enthusiastic about the product. A total cost possibly pushing \$3 million-and a subsequent requirement to sell closer to 200,000 unitsputs significant pressure on all parties involved. In the end, it's the gamer who decides whether all the effort and cost are worth it.

REDL	REDLINE			
DEVELOPER: PUBLISHER:	Beyond Games Accolade 800-245-7744			
WEB: PLATFORM: AVAILABLE:	www.accolade.com Win 95 CD February 1998			

7/	96	8/96	12/96	3/9	7 7,	97	10/97	11/97	1/98	2/98
		Contract signed	1	First playab			ALPHA		Gold-master	
Beyond Games shows			level milestone				DETA	approved	On store	
Accolade proof of concept Fi		First	playable milestone First min		First mini-g	nini-game milestone		BETA		shelves



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and took out an enemy block.



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"Constructor is fun and challenging on so many levels."

- GameSpot (June '97)

"Constructor takes the Sim game idea to the Nth degree."

- ESM (April '87)

"Constructor grabs you with its humor and keeps you glued to your seat with its well balanced and compelling resource management aspect"

- Computer & Net Player (July '97)

"The humor is sharp, the graphics are well-composed, and the gameplay is intelligent without being dull."

- GameSant (June '97)



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Master resources, control territories, build empires. It's all in a day's work.



Mess with the mob and you'll be taken out with the trash!



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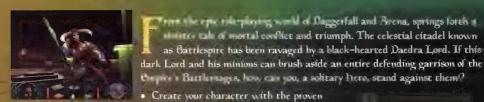
Another day, another mobster to pay off, another drunken rave to bust up, another commune to fumigate. This is no ordinary sim. This is a city where the foremen take graft, unlicensed repairmen screw up your apartment buildings and psychos roam the streets. We gave life to your simulation in all its funky, misbegotten, low-down glory. So if you want to build sprawling utopias, get rich and rule the world — you're gonna have to get your hands dirty.

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SNEAK PEEK

Turn-based tactical battle in the original X-COM mold

Incubation

By Daniel Morris

fter playing an early version of Blue Byte's Incubation, it's going to be awfully hard for me to get into real-time strategy at the tactical level. This dynamic squad-level game plays out in turnbased battles that are twice as ferocious and gripping as any real-time squabbling I've done recently.

Incubation is the next step in the evolution of the Battle Isle series, which has won all kinds of attention in Europe but not much on our fair

Scay-Ger, the native creatures of the planet. and they emerge as vicious monsters hell-bent on wiping out the colony.

> You direct a squad of Space Marines in

Aliens-style missions, exploring the gloomy halls of the colony and engaging the mutants at close quarters in terrifying fights. Your goal is to evacuate the colony, buying time for the civilians to escape by holding the beasts at bay. Is it safe to assume that you're expendable?

Well, Incubation gives you a lot to live for. There's much encouragement to keep as many of your Marines alive as you can for as long as possible. With each kill and each mission survived, your soldiers gain experience points and become more skilled and

> valuable— a consideration when it's time to select troops to walk

point and go digging into

This is where Incubation's next big treat comes in. The game can be viewed in full 3D glory from any perspective. Not only is there a freefloating camera that you can reposition as you like, but you can also jump into the perspective of any combatant-Marine or mutantand direct the combat from his/its eyes. If it's a God-view of the entire battle environment you want, you got it. If you prefer to "feel" the



battle from the perspective of any character—friend or foe.

frightening uncertainty of a firefight waged entirely within your field of vision, you got it.

All this is rendered in stunning 3D graphics with full animations, derived from Blue Byte's celebrated Extreme Assault engine. The level of artwork and animation-in the detail of both the grim industrial settings and the movements of combatants as they run and walk and crouch and die-is outstanding.

It's very reassuring to see Blue Byte adopting the turn-based model for Incubation, because it seems to be exactly the right approach. I was immediately back in the white-knuckle world of the original X-COM: UFO Defense, carefully watching my every step-the kind of atmospheric tension and explosive outbursts of action that the turn-based tactical model provides. And like X-COM and Jagged Alliance, you come to grow attached to your troops after having walked so many carefully considered miles in their shoes; it's the kind of personalized involvement that a real-time model can't accommodate.

Incubation looks to be one of the best tactical combat games of the year. If the final version manages to provide a wealth of inventive environments and missions, it will have a home on my hard drive.



INCUBATION Blue Byte PUBLISHER: www.bluebyte.com PLATFORM: Win 95 CD October 1997

AVAILABLE:





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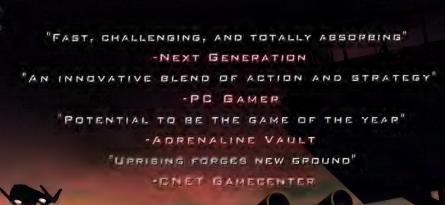


HE WOULD HAVE GRADUATED F1RST_N HIS CLASS FROM THE ACADEMY, ATE EXCEPTHE ATHE DRILL SERGEANT.

THE DRILL SERGEANT.

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SNEAK PEEK

Sid Meier's Gettysburg

By Peter Olafson

ow that my brothers and I are all grown up (well, more or less; I am reviewing computer games for a living), we've gotten into the habit of asking each other what we want for birthdays and Christmas.

It's a custom absorbed from a good-hearted, strong-willed aunt who was determined that her nephews' and nieces' fondest wishes be fulfilled. By contrast, my parents rarely asked what I wanted,

Real-time Civil War action from the strategy general

and when I volunteered concepts-the Minibike Campaign of 1970 comes to mind-they were ignored. But their gifts did strike a fine balance: They got me stuff that could put my eye out, and stuff that helped me see farther.

Thirty-odd years on, their judgment has been vindicated. I didn't put my eve out, And three times in the last year, I've gone back to gift books from my childhood to provide a visual reference point for computer war games. The combat sequences in I-Magic's The Great Battles of Alexander made me think of A Child's History

of the World, TalonSoft's Battleground games brought me back to the rich battle illustrations in The Golden Book of the Civil War.

And on a weekend in late July, I revisited that wonderful light history in the company of Sid Meier's Gettysburg.

The veteran MicroProse game designer has been threatening to do a Civil War game for years, and under the aegis of Firaxis Games, he's come up

with a corker: a real-time war game that takes the concept MicroProse started exploring in Fields of Glory and brings it to glorious life. Potentially, this is the Civil War game.

Meier could scarcely have chosen a more critical battle to simulate. Gettysburg was the linchpin in Robert E. Lee's ambitious and risky mid-1863 invasion of Pennsylvania, and his defeat there was the mortal blow to the South's chances of winning the war.

The Confederate general needed to gather his forces, which had become strung out in the course of the march north, and Gettysburg was the most convenient assembly point. On the morning of

July 1, a Confederate unit dispatched in search of sorely needed shoes ran into a Union cavalry patrol. The battle would



the hills south of the town before Lee's battered army began its retreat.

center. Check out the Federal unit running

up to bolster the line.

Gettysburg is a hex-free zone. You don't play on a pretty game board in the fashion of the TalonSoft games, but in a zoomable Pennsylvania countryside complete with low hills, orchards, streams, roads, and houses. Your units don't

> have movement allowances; you simply tell them where you want them to go, and they get there in their own timeand as the terrain and a thoughtful enemy allow.

Ten tutorial scenarios, eight

of them assembled in a kind of minicampaign, let you get the hang of the controls under close supervision and without even a peek at the manual. Another 20-from First Contact to High Water Mark: Pickett's Charge-take you through the battle's significant engagements (played from either side, and each with its own detailed briefing), and you can have the program throw one together for



SNEAK PEEK



ie famous engagement at Cemetery Ri

you at random. Or you play out the whole shebang at once—effectively a campaign game that unfolds

according to how you fight it.

The controls are utterly natural. You direct units wa a click-and-drag system that recalls Chris Crawford's Battle of the Bulge game of some years back, use screen-bottom icons to issue more detailed battle commands (from skirmish to charge to wheel), and pull down menus for information.

The graphics? Frankly, I'm speechless. They're so much like the illustrations in my Civil War book, it's almost scary. It's a game to watch as well as play. Waves of little men making their way across the map, puffs of smoke and echoing crashes from hillrop batteries, the yells of the



charge, the panic of the rout, the yelled reports from your adjutant, the tiny bodies beginning to pile up—it's all here, in minute detail, as though someone had built a living diorama inside your monitor. You can hear your men

complain of inactivity if you're slow off the mark; and, if you zoom in, you can even see them reloading and aiming before they fire.

Firaxis is clearly on its way to achieving the effects for which it was aiming. It's given me exactly what I wanted in a Civil War game, the sense of realism and fun that has always been Meier's hallmark.

Now, lest you think this is over the top for a preview, note that the version I played was more or less complete, missing only the odd feature and multimedia amenues. (The only thing I couldn't test was multiplay, which will support as many as eight players.) But I'm confident it would take a criminal act of negligence for this game to be anything but great when Origin releases it in October.

And I'm sure that, when my birthday rolls around this fall, I'm almost certain to get exactly what I want.

SID MEIER'S GETTYSBURG

DEVELOPER: PUBLISHER:

AVAILABLE

Firaxis Games Origin Systems www.firaxis.com Win 95 CD July 1997

A CHAT WITH SID MEIER

PCG: Is this the same Civil War game that you've been kicking around for a few years?

SM: Well, I've always tried to write games that I would like to play, and the Civil War has fascinated me ever since I was a lod. When I was 8 years old, my father bought me the American Heritage Golden Book of the Civil War. I spent hours poring over this book, especially the battle paintings by David Greenspan. Each painting shows the terrain from a 3D perspective, but instead of adding blocks, symbols, or arrows to show the armies, David painted entire brigades of tiny men marching, finig, and charging across the field. I think I've always known that the Civil War battle game I wanted to play would have the look and feel of those amazing pictures.

Of course, it's one thing to look at a picture: it's another to turn that concept into a game with depth that is still manageable and fun I had tried a number of different approaches over the last 10 years, but up until now nothing really felt like a Civil War battle....Once we threw away the old ideas, genre restrictions, and "me-too" thinking, the game came together in an amazing way. We've been adding a lot of cool features to the design over the last couple of months: variants, what-ifs, battlefield ambient sound, modem, LAN, Internet, player vs. player, team vs. team, and team vs. Al, in addition to a strong playervs.-Al mode, It's a pretty exciting product. PCG: How did you choose the Battle of Gettsyburg? SM: Our first decision was to focus on a tactical hattlefield scale, and then we decided on the battle. The Battle of Gettysburg was a natural selection from a gaming standpoint because it was a fairly eventy balanced battle in which either side could have won. This makes it as much fun to command Confederate troops as it is to command the Union army. The Battle of Gettysburg is also one of the most studied, well-known battles of all time, so there are many millions of people who are familiar with it. And last but not least, the battleground is only about 90 minutes from our office, which has led to many fun field trips.







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SNEAK PEEK

Might and Magic VI: The Mandate

of Heaven

Bv Barry Brenesal

It's been a long time coming, but the wait is nearly over. Might and Magic VI: The Mandate of Heaven—the first major upgrade to this epic fantasy role-playing series in half a decade—will be in your twitching hands by the holiday season. I saw it under development at New World Computing headquarters recently, and it looked fantastic.



Thief and ninja have been dropped, but the other six classes return. Lockpicking and disarming traps are now skills.

Let's start with the graphics, since this is the most obviously enhanced area. Mandate applies a system of true 3D-rendered sprites to create elaborate objects in the hauntingly beautiful, 16-bit-color world of Enroth. No longer will you move onto a town icon and jump to a city interior where all buildings look alke. Instead, you'll glide over a smooth-scrolling terrain, viewing communities from above or below as they stretch and grow

in visibility. Each town is unique in overall layout, with many distinctive building textures and a great variety of shops.

Dungeon areas are more spacious and individualized, too, and they no longer empty out permanently: new tenants gather-

Karma counts

ing over time provide fresh challenges to adventurers in search of bloodletting. MM VI's system offers optional turn-based and real-time combat. It also incorporates combat preparation as a timing factor. For instance, a

pike does more potential damage than a hand ax, but it also takes longer to swing, giving your knight fewer shots at an opponent.

Thrrty skill sets—including Spear (which includes the pike), Identify, Plate Armor, and Pick Locks—can be developed over time as experience is gained and points are allotted. Each of your characters begins with just two skills that you select from a variety of those available to their particular class.

This applies to magic as well, which now forms eight separate skills orginating from as many unique magical disciplines. Don't expect to find a single Magic Guild shop offering an all-you-can-cast buffet for one price per customer—gaining access to certain spells means a trip to the relevant guild.

spells means a trip to the relevant guild.

Each of the eight Magic Guilds scattered throughout Enroth has its own cantrips, and there are more than 100 new spells.

Mandate is going to supply a far more interactive universe than its predecessors. The deeds you perform—for good and ill—travel the world of

> Enroth on the breath of its inhabitants. Opportunities for involvement are much greater: your party can now haggle, threaten, and beg from

> > Such detailed environments are asking to be explored.



This armor may not be effective protection, but Wonder Woman sure looks good.

NPCs. But if you acquire a bad reputation in a town, stealing and threatening everywhere, its immediate neighbors are likely to arrest your criminal butt when you show up. However, there is a goblin village in Mandate. Harass humans long enough, and you may find the goblins providing free access and a decent deal.

Quests, like rumors, occur in real time, and all ongoing plots continue in the background as your party explores, buys, kills, and dies.

Some quests you'll discover directly from their sources; others you'll find out about secondhand, over vast distances, and with plenty of distorted information.

There are even false quests, designed to destroy your party. Why? To prevent you from securing the approval of all six Regents, who dislike one another intensely and whose combined permission is necessary to gain entry to...the Oracle. Only the Oracle can explain the origin of Enroth's demon infestation and offer a solution.

When I left NWC, its president, Jon van Caneghem, said, "Most of us in-house can hardly wait to see the finished Mandate and play it ourselves." You're not alone in that desire, Jon. Not by any means.

MIGHT AND MAGIC VI

DEVELOPER: New World Computing
PUBLISHER: 3D0
Well: www.3do.com

PLATFORM: WWW.3do.com
Win 95 CD
AVAILABLE: December 1997



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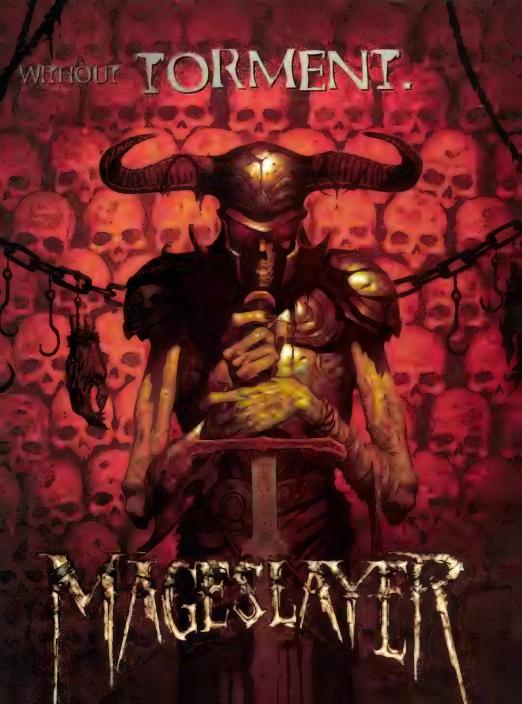
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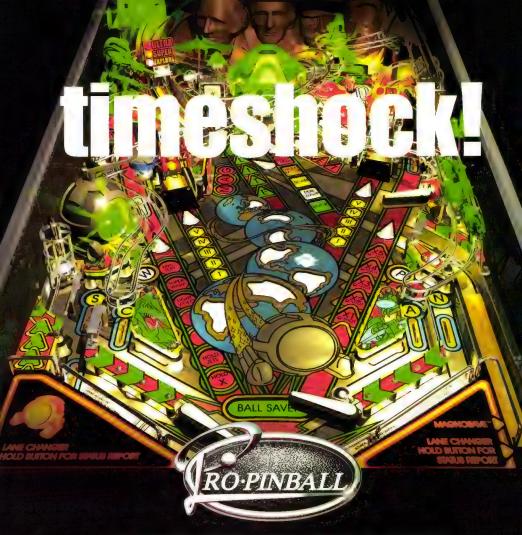




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PC CD-ROM

SNEAK PEEK

The Curse of Monkey Island

By Rob Smith

The history of Monkey Island—the epic struggle between hero Guybrush Threepwood and his pirate nemesis, LeChuck-1s one smothered in critical acclaim. From The Secret of Monkey Island through Monkey Island 2: LeChuck's Revenge, the quality animation, intriguing and involving puzzles, and sharp comedy helped turn the series into a hot property for LucasArts.



The third installment plunges Guybrush into a love triangle involving his beloved Elaine and the undead LeChuck, who's ready to make her his bride. The path of true love never does run fair, as the saying goes, and Guybrush gets to find out firsthand when the ring he carefully slips onto Elaine's

You never know when an umbrella

finger turns out to be cursed. The gold statue that used to be Elaine doesn't really stir the same passion, so Guybrush now has a quest-to remove the curse.

Along the way, he has to overcome a range of LeChuck's villains-as well as the pirate boss himselfin a hugely comic adventure.

"We wanted to take all the parts of the first two games that we love-the nonlinearity, Guybrush, and a few of the old charac-

ters-and come up with a completely new story," co-project leader Larry Ahern explains. "It needed to blend interactive elements with fluid, entertaining cut-scenes."

The dialogue for 30 different characters is supplied by 25 voice actors. In the lead role of Guybrush, actor Dominic Armatto brings a familiarity with games-and Monkey Island in particular. "He walked in not knowing what he was reading for, and when he found out, he announced that he'd just finished the first game and that he was Guybrush ez and gentlemen, Threepwood," co-project leader

> Threepwood Esq. The whole recording process took about a month: 8,000 lines of interactive dialogue were committed to tape. That's problematic with a game that has an open environment; responses to player questions are difficult to match up, for example, because several answers are recorded for the same question. But nonlinearity and a fully interactive environment



bridge don't inspire confidence are the key elements to

making the Monkey Island adventure so absorbing. "We want to make an immersive world where everything is alive and there's lots of stuft going on," Ahern says. "Depth, fun characters, and good jokes are what provide lasting appeal."

While the graphic-adventure genre appears to have become less prominent in recent months, Ahern offers a solid reason for its lasting appeal

and Curse's potential success:

"These games are around because they let you have fun. I go back to the first Monkey Island now and still laugh. We don't have to worry

about full 3D environments and other buzzwords because the game's full of fun characters, engaging story, and interactivity.

"We also love Guybrush," he adds. And with the level of animation, detailed cut scenes, and the ability to interact with virtually everything in the environment, Curse looks set to prove that there's still plenty of life in graphic adventures.

Johnathan Ackley adds. is going to be useful.

THE CURSE OF MONKEY ISLAMII

LucasArts www lucasarts com October 1997

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AFRAID OF THE DARKY

"Incubation looks to be one of the best tactical combat games of the year."



"Every single weapon has some kind of demented effect, all of which are wonderfully gross and twisted."



"...Incubation may be the only turn-based strategy game to feature real-time 3D graphics. And the paratalks, spactacular



"Think X-Com meets Quake and you might see the picture, and subsequently start salivating."

THIEF (











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Get ready for a fright

SNEAK PEEK (*)

Resident Evil

PlayStation game sales records, Capcom's action/horror hit Resident Evil has made its way to PCs. All these months later, the muxture of graphic horror with adventure underpinnings still remains engaging.

In the role of either pilot Chris Redfield or demolition expert Jill Valentine, you're paid to

investigate a helicopter crash, but it turns sour. Pursued by a bunch of weird beasts, you take refuge in a sprawling mansion—which is also crawling with strange beasts. It's a fright-packed action/adventure from beginning to spinetingling conclusion that

PlayStation owners drooled over. Now it's our turn. Capcom and Virgin have done some good work

Capcom and Virgin have done some good work with the game's characters, which look a good deal better than they do in the PSX version. That's a result of Resident Evil's expansive 3D-accelerator support for 3Dfx Voodoo, Rendition, and Matrox Mystique cards. Even the demo covers support for a variety of accelerators, although those not packing the hardware can still run he game in a software-enhanced version. As for Direct3D support, Virgin says it won't be supporting D3D cards. Full SideWinder gamepad

> support will appease anyone who never quite adapted to the PlayStation's controller.

Given all the hype generated by Resident Evil's PSX incarnation, gamer interest in the PC version is already high. That's why you'll find it exclusively on this month's PC Games.exe. We're hoping that by

the time Resident Evil reaches store shelves, Capcom and Virgin will have adapted to the new PC platform and implemented some of the enhancements a PC can make feasible, aside from simple hardware



power. But the basic fright factor appears to all be in place and ready to make you jump.

-George T. Chronis



Battlespire: An Elder Scrolls Legend

B ethesda's Elder Scrolls series is turning into an extended franchise with this latest action/RPG that's aiming to take the Xⁿgine to new graphical heights. Battlespire is actually way outside the established Elder Scrolls universe—it takes place in an extra-dimensional castle that serves as a training ground for the Emperor's elite Battlemages. (Think of it as a fantasy-realm *Top Gun.*) No sooner do you show up for your first day of exercises than



you realize that something is horribly wrong.

Everyone is dead, slaughtered by the grotesque minuous of the demigod

Dacdra. This evil prince has seized the Battlespire as his

throne, and guess what newly inducted Battlemage trainee has to knock him off?

The Battlespire's labyrinths are spectacular texture-mapped environments thick with menace and foreboding. Bethesda has gone for the

"grm and gritty" in making each of the castle's locations and monsters as foul as humanly possible. Light-sourcing comes mainly from torches and fire as you pick your way carefully through the twisting tunnels. But as gloomy as the setting is, it should never fail to hold the eyes as the Xⁿgine gets a workout.

An involved character-generation system

One of the many nastles you can expect inside the Battlespire's walls.

should give you plenty of reasons to become attached to your onscreen self. Thoroughly

Out of an Elder Scrolls dimension

customizable, it allows you to create a character with highly individualized skill sets and attributes—you can even create your own spells to form a personalized magical repertoire.

Battlespire will be playable solo, multiplayer head-to-head, team-against-team, or cooperatively against the castle's evils. A visually ambitious game with a complex character-generation system, it should bring both RPG and action fans a healthy dose of darkness.

—Daniel Morris

BATTLESPIRE Possissin: Bethesda Softworks Wis: www bethsoft.com Dos 5.0 CD Assassi: November 1997



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SNEAK PEEK

Deathtrap Dungeon

ho would expect the first serious contender for the title of Tomb Raider-killer to come from...Eidos? Sure enough, the publisher of last year's groundbreaking third-person exploration game is now bringing you Deathtrap Dungeon, a fantasy/action game much in the mold of Lara

Croft's successful adventures-but

with a nasty fantasy edge.

The mastermind behind Deathtrap Dungeon is Ian Livingstone, a founding father of the British role-playing scene and the man behind the enormously successful Fighting Fantasy gamebooks, on which Deathtrap Dungeon is loosely based.

The game puts you in the dark heart of a forbidding labyrinth, exploring 10 giant levels as either a rugged male adventurer or a more limber female counterpart. Playing from a dynamic third-person perspective, you walk, run, jump, crouch, slash, and spell-cast your way through the catacombs, fighting 55 different types of monsters. Skeletons, orcs, dragons-all the staples are here to be slain, along with a grotesque surprise or two (the snakewoman sorceress should keep you on full alert when you stumble upon her corpse-littered lair).

But the monsters aren't the only things claiming

lives in these tunnels. The unseen (and, more often, just cleverly disguised) traps from which the dungeon takes its name can be even more lethal than any snaggle-toothed monstrosity.





of a flamethrower.

Booby-trapped chests might land you some arrows in the back. A covered pit will send you straight down into a nearly bottomless shaft (you'll know it's only nearly bottomless when you splat). Swinging spikes guard the entrances to tunnels, requiring precision-timing evasion.

Deathtrap Dungeon looks to be as graphically involving an action-adventure as anything we've seen since Tomb Raider. Some key differences-Deathtrap Dungeon is much more hack and slash. without a lot of Tomb Raider's cerebral stretches. And, unlike TR, Deathtrap Dungeon will support four-way multiplay over LAN and modem. Eidos may be casting some black magic of its own.

-Daniel Morris

LONGBOW 2

Origin's AH-64D Longbow was one of the bestreceived flight sims ever, and was an almost unanimous selection among gaming critics for Best Flight Sim of 1996. It was hard to imagine what improvements could be made.

Then we got our hands on LB2. The graphics are even better, with the Longbow, Cobra, Kiowa Scout, and Hind rendered in astonishing detail. The terrain includes elevation changes and ground features like roads, ditches, bluffs, and ridges, all affecting gameplay.

Combat occurs over huge battlegrounds, where many dozens of vehicles and infantrymen can go at it while you



provide support, scouting, or assault missions over their heads. The intensity of the ground battles can be so high that at times the sky is furiously crisscrossed with missile trails-many of them headed for you.

Multiplayer capabilities will let players engage in the same battle, accepting different missions in different locations and influencing the outcome of the greater engagement. Jane's Combat Simulations is even toying with the idea of letting pilots get shot down and escape on foot, and sending other players on rescue missions to fetch them. It's coming your way around October.

JSF

So that F-22 you've been flying lately feels a little slow, eh? Well, Eidos may have just what you're looking for in its upcoming sim JSF, which will model the two prototype Joint Strike Fighter air-

craft Lockheed Martin (the X-35) and Boeing (the X-32) are building for the US military. Developed by Interloop, JSF



features some amazing graphics, including more detail-buildings, trees, etc.-the closer you get to the ground, and "an unlimited view to the horizon." JSF will have 10 million square miles of terrain to conquer via four dynamic campaigns. Of course, the fighters will have more toys to kill with, too, such as the AGM-154 Joint Stand Off Weapon and the Lockheed Martin Wind Correct Munitions Dispenser, Don't those sound fun? You can see for yourself early next year.

October 1997 October 1997 • PC GAMES

AUAD ARTS

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Cuick Shot

Elements: New [Centauri Galaxy]



Element of Surprise



Element of Danger



Element of Destruction



Element of Disaster







Terra>Outpost2

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12	Me Microbo .119	Psychosis Psychosis . 9054	Fusion Fusion .5005	Danger .0054	GJ Couraga .0202	Vacuum of space .290
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Element of Gertain Death			Gy 3, Conspiracy	Strategy .1005	Tedpology Technology .071	AN Attack .0334



Earth is a distant memory. All that remains is a handful of humans who chose to follow you to the stars. Getting here was the easy part. Now you must battle time, nature and half the human race to save your people from certain annihilation. Survival is just the beginning.





Lands of Lore: Guardians of Destiny

By Peter Olafson

an I say just one word about Lands of Lore: Guardians of Destiny? Stonekeep. It's not simply a surface resemblance, and it's not an unflattering one. Sure, both Westwood's long-awaited sequel to its 1993 classic and Interplay's 1995 epic are brawny action/adventurescum-RPGs that were years in development. But both also offer intimate, hands-on game designs filtered through somewhat dated game engines.

all laid out in a tremendous rendered intro. I know. I know. a rendered intro and 50 cents won't get you a cup of coffee these days, but this one moves from the trite-a naughty little girl escap-



Plunge into an absorbing fantasy realm

And in each case, the result is profoundly pleasant-without quite being electric.

In this four-CD adventure, you're cast as Luther-son of Scotia, the bad girl in the original game-who has inherited from his late mother an imperfectly transmitted version of her prize shape-shifting magic. That is, you can turn into other creatures-a doorway-filling monster and a lizard about as big as a shoe-but have no say in the where and when.

So, naturally, part of your task is acquiring self-control. The other, bigger part-you knew this was coming, right?-is dealing with Belial. In the background story, that disobedient god was assassinated on order of his fellows for incessant meddling in mortal affairs.

But not before first taking precautions to ensure his rebirth, which is now imminent. This is

ing her village to play in its, or you're in for a het for

the jungle-to the

doomstruck, to the awestruck, to the comic, to the exhilarating. I've watched it a few times since, and I still enjoy it. It really is a little movie.

Like Lands of Lore, Guardians is a first-person,

single-character game. Beginning in Draracle's domain (where the escaped Luther is being hunted down by Gladstone guards), you'll traverse about 20 expansive levels gathering information, experience, equipment, and magical ingredients. and-of course-fighting.

This part of the game has been handled in an interesting

way. If RPG adventures are going to move beyond their current niche status, they're going to have to become more accessible to the masses; in this spirit, Guardians' combat isn't the hateful, repetitive affair you find in so many games. It's the exception, just as it is in real life. You fight when you must. (Monsters are splendidly modeled, free-roaming, and at least smart enough to run when badly hurt.)

Adopting the adventure spirit, you don't have to micromanage Luther as you might in a hardcore RPG role; you just play. The inventory works like a pocketknife-everything folds into your character's inquiring-eyebrowed, goateed portrait. To give him something, you drop it on him. To use it, you either pop it into the spots designated for weapons and armor or right-click it on him. To make something, you drop it on the other component. The few stats are intuitive and almost invisible. In addition, a handy autosave function ensures that you never go too far, into too much danger, without a backup on hand should the action become overwhelming.

I'll be interested to see how people respond to



Luther. He's a real guy sort of guy, and his commentary can range from the downright stupid ("I like the pretty lights") to the comically selfimportant. But before we were out of the first level, I was rather enjoying his foolishness, and that's important. If you can't create your character-and you can't in Guardians-you'd damn well better like the one you're stuck with. Furthermore, the unpredictable shape-shifting seems like an extension of Luther's personality.

The big change over the original LoL is movement and terrain. Gone is the square-by-square

branches aside.

But design is the center of Guardians, and it's superb. Like Stonekeep, this game seems to have been written like a book. Nothing-not the placement of a monster not the smallest item-seems to have been handled casually. Unlike Daggerfall, which uses a random-generation method to enhance the depth but loses

some of the

central focus as a result, the game designers' signatures are all over Guardians. At the risk of sounding like a Lifetime special, it's all about choices: optional paths, optional approaches, scads of things to do and people to meet, views to see, effects to create, little story sequences to watch.

I don't want to give too much away, because this is the heart of the game. Let's just say that the designers are clearly players, and they've anticipated a lot of the

the duration.

For Guardians, which has been in development since 1994, it means the game uses the fake-3D style of the early 3D engines. Much of the scenery seems paper-thin-the hunt-and-click static screens are simply a mistake-and I wasn't surprised when I walked through it. The conversations are pretty much automatic, and the game can bog down a bit in spots. It supports MMX, but it sometimes stops dead to load its consistently tuneful music.

This is not to say that technology is everything. Indeed, technology for its own sake is no virtue, but it can provide the steely edge that makes a game irresistible.

progress in the style of the Eye of the Beholder games that LoL is rooted in. (The EoB games were created by Westwood as an independent developer.) In its place is a free-scrolling game engine that lands somewhere between Duke Nukem 3D and Doom, with added slopes and uneven surfaces. And they've done well with it. On rising

ground, I really had a sense that I was climbing a hill. When I was in the jungle with little orange dinosaurs running around, great purplish cats bouncing through the brush, and birds taking off at my approach, I felt I was truly there. Here, the sound effects are a huge help; it really felt as though I was pushing

things players might do, allowing the game to respond in detail. The result is that Guardians of Destiny is full of life, and that's wonderful.

> life, designers have to pin down the base technology-it defines what sort of game it is-and live with the consequences for

And Guardians of Destiny is not quite irresistible. I always enjoyed it when I was playing it, but I was also always able to detach myself when it came time to feed the dogs, take out the trash, or watch the news. It never took me over.

Yet, by the same token, I never could completely stop. Guardians of Destiny is an ingenious game, and players who look beyond the superficial imperfections will take supreme pleasure in a meticulously crafted adventure that's as welcome in 1997 as it would've been in 1995.

On the other hand, at some stage in a game's production 997 • PC GAMES

GAME OF THE MONTH

GUARDIANS OF DESTINY **STRATEGIES**

Here's a jump-start to get you headed down the rocky road to Belial.

he Draracle's Caves is a large but straightforward level that ends with a meeting with the Draracle himself, and you should be able to find your way through with a minimum of fuss. Note that it does contain a lot of side pockets with useful stuff. Break the water spouts, cut the chain, and stack the crates.

You can't get out via the cave entrance. but it's worth trying in each of your alternate incarnations to see the animations that result.

A useful side road turns up once the Draracle's done with you. It's easy to miss, since you may be tempted to just grab the goodies on the table and head through the portal to the southern continent. But you'll arrive there significantly better equipped if you first touch the tapestry on the righthand wall of the portal's antechamber, and then the wall behind it.

Congratulations! You've found your way into what's effectively a secret level-the Museum of the Draracle. Get the triangular skeleton key, which you'll find embedded in the wall at the end of the entry corridor. (This enables a spoken description for each exhibit and opens the door to the final

one.) You can (and should) take most of what you

see, but know that in so doing you'll antagonize the skeletal warriors who guard the place. Check your inventory after each encounter, as they'll try to retrieve your skeleton key The tricky part is get-

ting out-the entry corridor has been closed off. You'll need to find the time-

machine exhibit in the museum's southeast corner. Club the hourglass you find with your weapon of choice. The sand will run out, and Luther will begin to age at a rapid rate and eventually die unless you take corrective measures.

The only way to set things right is to escape the

exhibit. Back into the room adjoining the hourglass chamber and turn right. If the righthand panel of the wall you're facing doesn't already display owar damage,

it will shortly. You just have to finish the job and jump through the resulting hole. The rest is pure pie, and you get to travel to the southern continent

the fun way.

The key to winning the hearts and minds of Huline people is the recovery of a missing woman. Sooner or later, you'll want to explore most of the map (the big cats bounding through the brush won't bother you; just watch out for the poisonous spiders), but the southwest corner holds the key. Here, a modest maze leads to the entrance of an unstable volcanic



A little magic goes a long wa

cave. Again, you'll want to explore thoroughlythere's more to the cave than it seems-but Shalla can be found near her daughter's remains in the cave's northern extremity.

However, you won't be able to reach her until the cave's two beasties are dead. Happily, the monsters themselves will do half the job for you. Use a "spark" spell to loosen the overhanging rocks above the ravine, and the resultant land bridge will bring them into conflict. (You can watch the fight through a gap in the wall.)

You'll have to do the giant spider on your own. Just make sure it's dead-not simply driven off. (Note: It's apparently possible to kill the critter by chasing it off the precipice southwest of the enclosure where Shalla is imprisoned,)

Once you've spoken to Shalla, the previously locked village gates will be open to you. You're on your way!







PARADISE LUST.









Henrietta Emerson

Age: 64 Retired

Former charity worker and treasurer of the Wives of Foreign War Veterans. Killed tragically during anti-videogame violence protest rallu.

Ronald Wanker

Aye: 52

Mental Health Technician

Employed at Paradise Psychiatric Center for 27 years. Fatally wounded by multiple bullet wounds.

Jennie Peters

Age: 17

Paradise High Senior

Majorette in local gouth marching band. Beath caused by 3rd degree burns inflicted by exploding repairs.



PARADISE LUST...

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> But of the most powerful game editors we're ever seen in an action game."

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AND THEY THOUGHT YOU WERE SUCH A NICE, QUIET BOY.

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Welcome to Paradise ... Arizona. They're out to get you (or are they?)

Conspiracy or Insanity? It doesn't matter, you don't have time to think, only time to kill. GO POSTAL!

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- Real-time 3D characters rage against beautifully hand-paint willing fields.
- So freak in real, your victims will actually beg for mercy and scream for their lives!
- Multi-player network play over modem, LAN, or the Internetco you can go Postal with up to 15 ther death row candidates.
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The Game Every Gamer Wanted And No One Else Disied to Meles









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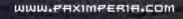




The largest, most sophisticated game universe ever created is at your control.











Sandwarriors

By Bob Lindstrom

ther it's Ancient Civilizations Dress-Up Day at the Strategic Air Command, or someone mummied up the Wing Commander cast in Stargate costumes. In either case, there are a lot of familiar dunes and detonations in Sandwarriors, a new 3D action sim published by Interplay.

The interactive-game industry is rapidly dethroning Hollywood as the home of the unashamed knockoff. Wing Commander is just Star Wars with joysticks (and stuffed-animal villains). Tomb Raider is merely Indiana Jones,

Fly like an Egyptian

post-sex change. Both products, of course, prove that you don't have to be original to create a great game. Rip-offs can be a ripping good time.

Sandwarriors sits well beneath those inspired imitators. As games go, it's a B-movie. I suspect it's no coincidence that Stargate came out in 1994, probably just before they were brainstorming the Sandwarriors design. Like that movie, this game combines futuristic science-fiction hardware with ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics, architecture, and costumes. Call it "hiero-tech."

Your aircraft/hovercraft is shaped like a scarab

beetle, its little wings adorably unflexing to go into battle. The cities under attack are adobe-tan monuments nestled between huge sand dunes. And included among the attackable nasties are wasps. (No, we're not talking white guys protesting Disney and Marilyn Manson. These are real big insects.)



On the whole, all this pyramid exotica is just window dressing. The typically superfluous plot hints at ancient mysteries in the conflict between your House Horus and the opposing Setian forces. Still, the 24 combat missions in a campaign could be been lifted from any flight sim: get briefed, check the map, fly out, find the target, blow it up. In fact, when you get a spoken radio transmission from your wingman, he drawls just like a stereotypical

Top Gun redneck with a flightstick in one hand and a drumstick in the other.

On the beneficial side, Sandwarriors' derivative qualities also extend to the range of baddies. There are other *Top Gun*-like aucraft. Tanks. Imperial Walkers and MechWarriors. A Death Star-like enemy base. Large, futuristic, multilevel cities with underground installations, all with big guns. In short, this one-stop interactive shop gives you plenty of target variety—along with lots of strategic options. And, as you progress through the

game, you'll also get a number of new weapons to fire at them.

You may also need a new computer, though. The graphics in Sand-warriors look great; but that ain't "quick" sand out there, pal. Even running in 320-by-200 mode with slightly reduced detail on a P150, the frame rate seldom

smoothes out enough in crowded combat to give you the feeling of high-speed exhilaration we expect in today's 3D-accelerated world. At 640-by-480 modes or higher, Sandwarriors is gorgeous, but that beauty doesn't race into action unless you've got some very impressive computing power under the hood. Unfortunately, Interplay has no future plans to support acceleration hardware. (We won't even bring up the conspicuous lack of multiplayer support.)

So how does it play? Tough. Sandwarriors bombards you with lots of challenges. In some

Hight miceloss and hiero-decorated corequire consideration Pentium power to





missions, you're hardly out of the briefing room before someone is trying to pack you in mummy wraps. With hi-res enemies shooting from above, below, and in your face, it's sometimes hard to tell just what direction death is coming from. Even warriors Ra blessed with fast reflexes may find themselves in missions where they're more frustrated than entertained.



DEVELOPER: G
PUBLISHER: IT
80
WEB. VA
PLATFORM: D
REQUIRES. P

Interplay 800-468-3775 www.interplay.com DOS 6.0/Win 95 CD P75, 16MB RAM, 80MB HD, SVGA, 2x CD-ROM drive

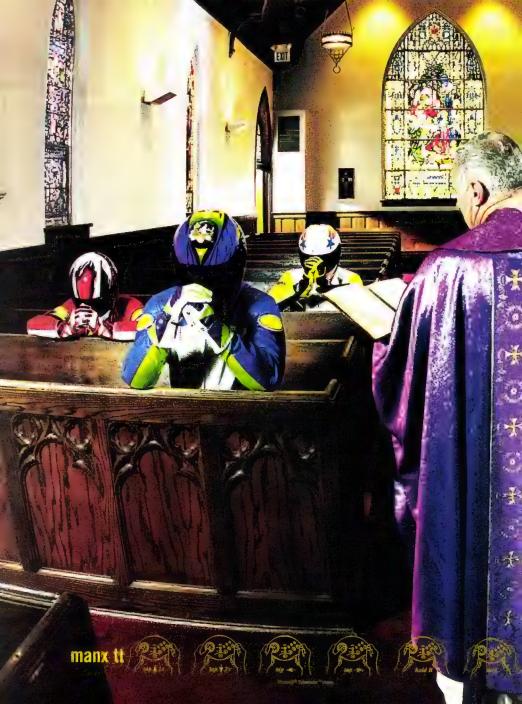
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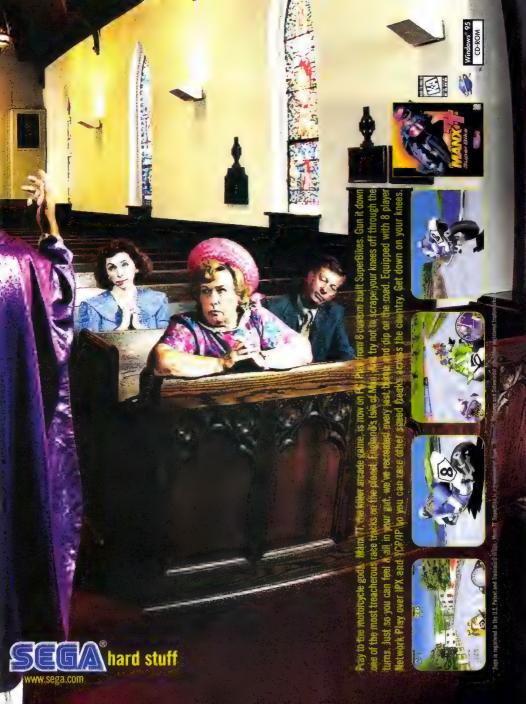
TIPS N Don't let the wings fool you. Your noverant bug is a seffective on land as it is in the air. When tanks are on the agends, forget flight. Get down, sneak around. When on your way to a mission, it's easy to talk immercessing losses by wandening over a well-protected urban center. Map a cautious path over unimhabited areas. ▼ When the gods frown on you, cheat. Two freely downloasable Sandwarn patch files—weapons ap and mission.zp—are available at www.oremlin.ou.k.



led fortresses pack Sandwarriers lets of high-firepower action.

October 1997 • PC GAMES







Atomic Bomberman

By Rob Smith

o self-respecting Super Nintendo owner could hold his head up in public without the knowledge that a copy of Super Bomberman sits snugly in his machine, ready at all times. Bomberman is the classic multiplayer console game. and now Interplay has taken the original Hudson Soft-developed title and finally ported it to the PC.

For the uninitiated, what's the background story? Well, having played the bomb's four-way blast radius). These core power-ups are supported by gloves, boxing gloves, and boot icons that allow you to throw, punch, and kick bombs around the maze and even over the surrounding walls.

ere of a challenge, but It's ti hest 10-player option.

Get bombed out of your head

The real joy comes from playing against

ickdrep on another of the many layouts

Bomberman for years on the SNES and now on the PC, I can honestly say that I haven't a clue. More to the point. I don't care-story's not important in the slightest, even if there is one. But here's the concept: You play a Bomberman, roaming one of nine different mazes made up of destructible and indestructible walls. The object is to be the last man standing after dropping bombs to clear a way to your opponents, then frying their butts with a few strategically placed explosives.

All the action takes place in a very enclosed environment. As the destructible parts of the maze

are blasted, some of them reveal powerups. These come in the form of extra bombs (which are cumulative, so that you can drop more than one at once), speed boosts (to get those little Bomberman legs scurrying faster), and explosion-range boosts (the more you pick up, the greater

human opponents: getting a bunch of buddies together to talk trash to each other. Four players linked by SideWinder or GrIP gamepads is perfect. (The game does support up to 10 AI or human opponents, but that's excessive to the point of being unplayable-skill goes out the window.) It's not that the single-player game is bad-the computer Al is fairly challenging. All you need to win, though, is to simply avoid killing yourself. While the three computer Bombermen know how to play the game, the AI seems focused on avoiding bombs rather than on aggression against other players. As a result, single-player games offer a little practice, but otherwise miss the point.

animated. At certain points (like when you box yourself into a suicide situation), he performs excellent little stunts such as waving a flag saving "Bye," or tying a bandanna around his eyes as the executioner's bomb detonates. Get a bit bored, and the fluid animation lets you perform some funky dance moves as you get down to the thumping techno-style soundtrack. The tunes are good, and

ead into a mine and pop up in a different

on. The shaft that transports the

the incidental sound effects when picking up objects are fine, although they get a little irritating after a while.

rink and a coal mine, throw up interesting tactical variants on the familiar classics. Holes to move through, arrows for kicked bombs to

Each differently colored Bomberman is well

Different mazes, such as a hockey



follow, and the ice rink's sliding problems add extra spice. And a built-in editor lets you create your own mazes on top of the bunch that are supplied.

In essence, this is classic Bomberman for the PC

generation. Johnny No-Mates is not going to have too much to enjoy against the AI, but with three buddies and joypads all round, this is more simple, relaxing fun than a Quake deathmatch. And that's saving something.



MULTIPLAYER: A

Marvelous multiplayer mayhem: single-player snore

PUBLISHER PLATERNA REQUIRES:

Interplay 800-468-3775 www.interplay.com Win 95 CD 486DX/66, 16MB RAM. 40MB HD, 2x CD-ROM drive P90, 490MB HD, LAN,

At the beginning, try placing bombs

linked joypads, friends STREET PRICE:

to take two or more blocks out at once Collect the power-ups before placing more bombs. ▼ Use the boxing glove whenever possible—rt's tough to watch bombs fly in from the other side of the screen V Diseases are contagious; run into your opponents to pass them on. When you have the relly rcon, take care that bombs you kick don't bounce back in your direction.



THIS ISN'T A GAME



GOESASE A GAME



This is aBC's Monday Night Footh in '86' CD-ROM pame, a realistic simulation of what it feets like to suit up and walk onto the field with the strains of Hank Williams Jr. stinging in your ears. (And let's face it, it's the only way you'll ever be on Manday Night Football, pail.) It's crammed with stats, strating and 16 years of ABC Sports experience. The only things missing are the control lals. Experience the experience of ABC's Monday Night Football, '98.

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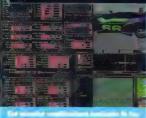
XCar: Experimental Racing

By Jason D'Aprile

n a departure from its more familiar adventure and role-playing games, Bethesda has launched into the racing business with XCar. Using the versatile Xⁿgine, XCar attempts to bridge the gap between hardcore racing simulation and arcadestyle driving and, strangely enough, manages to do lems: Despite the fact that the cars are wonderfully exotic, many of the tracks could've stood a splash of outrageousness as well, rather than leaning toward



And you thought real cars were cool



it quite successfully. The game is unlike any other racing game on the market with its group of fictitious muscle cars, a mixture of real and made-up tracks. and an incredible array of customization options.

to produce a second programming facility of THE REST PROPERTY AND LAST A STREET LIST.

Despite its fantasy cars, XCar is really made to compete with such real-world racers as NASCAR Racing 2 and Grand Prix II-at least in terms of the driving physics, car-tweaking, and handling options. Everything from the engine to the wing size to tire pressure (and more) can be modified. For those who have always wanted an in-depth racing simulation but find more standard cars rather tame and bland, it's heady stuff. Aside from extreme garage adjustments, the player even has on-the-fly control of where the HUD is on screen. rearview mirrors, and the five camera angles.

The car selection isn't lacking either, with a choice of 19 vehicles that make Need for Speed's babemobiles seem like subcompacts. You get 11 tracks of varying size, looks, and quality on which to test these beasts. Due to the game's sim nature, tweaking your car for each track is a required element. The tracks do, however, bring up one of the game's probmore realistic twists and turns (not that they aren't challenging or are particularly bad by any means).

The lack of a tournament mode is also disappointing. There's single-track and circuit racing (wherein you choose tracks to race on), but not longer-term career options. The game's AI difficulty level is user-adjustable, giving enough leeway to accommodate both beginners and hardcore drivers. Eight-player network and two-player modem support are also included, but no Internet play.

A lot of the handling physics seem unforgiving-the cars can swerve hideously out of control for reasons that sometimes aren't entirely clear. The arcade mode alleviates a great deal of the finer rigors of realistic driving hazards, but in either mode, precise control is important-both the tracks and the cars themselves can be hard to handle at times. Thankfully, the game works well with a steering wheel-in addition to standard joysticks and the keyboard-and the built-in controller calibration and configuration are handy as well.

Equally as impressive as the depth of options is that the game runs well in hi-res on mid-range Pentiums (like a P133). The 3Dfx-enhanced install is also pretty slick. Well-done sound effects are especially noticeable when going through tunnels, and thankfully, there's no annoving commentary Music is very sparse, however,



On the whole, XCar's an impressive start to Bethesda's foray into racing sims. This is an excellent racer, able to compete with such top-rung styles as NASCAR 2-and with much sexier cars.



Pentium, 16MB RAM. 25MB HD, VGA, 2x CD-ROM drive P133, 3Dfx accelerator

 Unless you're a hardcore manac, it's best to start with some of the realism settings low or off and ease into the more complex aspects of the game. V It's true, in order to get the best times on the various tracks, you'll need to play with your car parts. Pressing the right mouse button anywhere on the car-modification screen will give you some initial knowledge about what you're pointng at. Weather effects are unfortunately rather random, but rain is both cool and treacherous-be sure to adjust your speed accordingly for the conditions T Because XCar is so finely tuned on the small details, most of the rules of real-world racing apply So it's a good idea to read the rather hefty manual



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Fallout

By Barry Brenesal

ou remember the Mad Max films, with their ambivalent hero battling punk-leather gangs in a post-apocalyptic Australian outback? Well, pull a radioactive kipper out of the glowing barbie and sit a spell, because we're going to take a look at Fallout, a role-playing game set in a universe with a very similar futuristic vision.

design a strong thug, a charismatic quicktalker, a fast-moving thief, or a techie. There are dozens of skills, perks, and



Life in a radioactive playground

Your character is a member of Vault 13, an underground community whose water-purification chip has sprung a leak, so to speak. It's up to you to discover a replacement and bring it back before everybody dies. Finding that new chip is only part of the problem, since you'll have to do deals and deal death in a trip across a blighted, warped landscape, where radioactively mutated nightmares can take solid form any second.

Fallout's visuals do unobtrusive justice to the setting. The third-person, SVGA graphics reveal an isometric landscape, attractively painted in detail. You can "look" at nearly every object to gain information, even if it's only to discover that the thing you're headbutting is a tin wall. The interface for controlling this involves a reasonably intuitive combination of left and right clicks on buttons also used to achieve various tasks such as ending a combat turn or tracking conversations.

When you talk to an important NPC, the screen switches to a head shot with slight but decent animation. The good, idiomatic vocal acting throughout restored my dented faith in voiceovers.

Fallout lets you customize your character in many ways, enabling contrasting approaches to your encounters with objects and NPCs. You can other customization options to provide still greater detail. Unlike in Diablo, your overall profession affects more than just battles, since some tasks have multiple solutions depending upon your areas of specialization.

The type of role you assume also skews the amount of conversation you'll engage in: people will open up more to a good-looking, intelligent guy or gal than a slope-headed thug with fists the size of a Jeep. Either way, there's a lot of dialogue. NPCs will offer trades on equipment, useful information about surrounding dangers-and quests. You'll have to complete several of these to score certain items you're after. You may also find yourself stuck in no-win situations, where solving a quest means depriving a group of something they desperately need, to help others no less deserving. Hey, that's life.

> The one major exception to this level of realistic detail lies in Fallout's turnbased combat system. It was initially slated to receive the GURPS treatment (the Steve Jackson Games' table-top Generic Universal Role-Playing System), with its extensive variety of attacks and defenses. This was later dropped, and nothing was put in its place. As a result, if you've got a weapon in either hand, you can attack with it, and unused movement points in any given combat turn are automatically applied to

defense. That's all. The variety of armaments is excellent, but it's a shame that a world that's so richly conceived in some respects should lack an equally vivid combat system.

Fortunately, that's my only real disappointment with Fallout. There's nothing revolutionary or groundbreaking here: just an exceptionally taut, atmospheric, configurable, well-balanced, and highly immersive role-playing adventure, with loads of objects, people, and places to interact

GAMEPLAY: B+

GRAPHICS: B

SOUND CHECK: B

MULTIPLAYER: N/A

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GETTING STARTED: B PUBLISHER: Wen-PLATFORM: REQUIRES: RECOMMENDED: STREET PRICE:

 Always, always give your character a relatively high Intelligence stat. This makes it easier to improve skills as the game progresses, and offers more options in conversation. ▼ Befriend the dog by offering it food. ▼ You can heip out a variety of gangs with different quests, but choose carefully. Everybody you side with has enemies, and the benefits vary. ▼ Just because you knock down and stun somebody you're attacking doesn't mean they're out for the count. Watch them carefully ▼ The Small Frame trait combined with increased Strength gives you higher Agility without ts cost in severely limited character points. The Strength makes up for the trait's lower carrying ability. ▼ En route to Vault 15 due east, you'll encounter a small village with some useful quests. ▼ In the beginning, don't bother choosing Big Guns or Energy Weapons as emphasized skills. You won't have these weapons at first, and you don't want to waste

valuable training.





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Betrayal in Antara

By Barry Brenesal

fter Betrayal at Krondor turned out to be quite a success some three years ago, work eventually began on a sequel. However, licensing agreements went awry, and the rights to use author Raymond Feist's fantasy universe left Sierra for 7th Level, Nevertheless, Sierra plowed ahead with a seguel set in a whole new world.

Right-clicking over a magical, unknown

flom gives you a hint about what it does

That setting is the pseudo-medieval Antaran

Empire, where a well-meaning ruler presides over

they perform a variety of tasks in this three-CD

adventure, visiting dozens of towns, shops, and

dungeon sites, gradually unraveling the mystery

Like any good RPG, Antara lets your characters

improve their skill sets by using their talents, or by

fought by opponents with keen powers of observa-

tion. All of this takes place on attractive 3D terrain

that permits archery, a wide variety of spells, and

Several programming tweaks make Antara

thrust, swing, and hacking-attack modes.

an easier game to play than its predecessor,

although it's essentially based on the same

now allows you to view all major NPCs

several-years-old engine. The main interface

training with people they encounter. There's also

plenty of the expected turn-based RPG combat.

surrounding Antara's worst nightmares.

a corrupt government and disintegrating infrastructure. You lead a fighter, an archer, and a mage as



third slowly starves to death.

The map interface has been improved as well, allowing you to drop variously colored and symbolized icon "seals" (markers that can he annotated with several lines of of all, perhaps, is that Antara au-

(making it a little slow before battles). Yes, this is a virtue, as I discovered once when the game abruptly terminated due to local thunderstorm activity.

When characters stop fighting, buying, researching, and exploring, they start talking. And when they do, Antara stumbles. None of these people act in character. For instance, William's father, the current Lord Escobar, discusses state secrets in front of two people he's never known, a few minutes after his son walks into the room. There are periodic references to 20th-century food and fashions, as well as attempts at humor that are usually forced. And many of the interconnecting plot chapters lack the tension and focus of Krondor, often having nothing more pressing thematically than seeing "what life is like," like a

g an attack will b

characters waddle along while the

notes) at different locations. Best

tosaves right before your party plunges into conflict

weekend outing with three modern high-school kids.

That said, the miniplots you can accept or reject in your party's travels are both varied and occasionally challenging. The lever chests with their word puzzles require real thought, and the team of developers that dreamt up the bead-puzzle chests deserves a mass raise.

RPG repast

Antara's graphics are a mixed bag. Strong praise is due to the SVGA town architecture (I'm moving to Ticoro), the spacious, gloomy, twisty caverns, and the general variety of outdoor land-

scapes. But Antara's 2D forests, buildings, and NPCs lose their realistic feel very quickly.

Where Krondor gave you a sense of a selfenclosed universe, Antara always feels like a game. But it's a very good game-a feast for RPGers in a time of near famine.

GAMEPLAY: B+ GETTING STARTED: A-BETRAYAL IN ANTARA GRAPHICS: B SOUND CHECK: B

MULTIPLAYER: N/A

but it compensates with better graphics, a new spell system, and minor tweaks all around.

PUBLISHER Wite PLATFORM: REQUIRES:

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P100, 75MB HD STREET PRICE: \$55

TIPS You can't change the Easy/ Intermediate/Hard combat setting once you've set it at the start of a new game. Hard is a reasonable challenge, about the level of Krondor Intermediate requires very little effort, and Easy is for the idiots among us ▼ Highlight Aren's lowest spell skills (really "spell elements") as you gain more throughout the game. Each of these skills must reach a certain level before you can combine them to research new spells T Avoid spending too much time on the road, going everywhere and performing every task available. Otherwise, you'll defeat all available foes, grab and consume all their food, and have to start purchasing victuals. Then you'll start spending gold instead of making it. V Don't bother training William in archery, even though he can wield a bow. He moves slower than the others, and his bow skill is abysmal, Concentrate on his melee, defense, repair, and (optional) gambling abilities W When you hit your first tavern, The Spitting Lion Inn in Briala, just sit back and listen to the tune. It's the best one in the game, an O'Carolan-style Insh melody with haunting New Age harmonies. Pretty neat, huh?

you've encountered, as well as their locations and subjects of interaction. Click on a subject, and you hear a specific dialogue again. You no longer have to click on each dead foe after a battle to retrieve their goods; one click shows all. Food is also shared among the party, so

you never reach a situation in which two

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Dragon Dice

By Daniel Morris

ragon Dice has been a tabletop sensation for a while now. TSR's game of dice warfare is played with collectable dice that a die-hard collector can easily spend hundreds of dollars accumulating

In bringing it to the PC, Interplay's lavished the title with high production values, dramatic front-end artwork, and general A-list-type treatment that all

this platform, except for the fact that you're just staring at a monitor.

Multiplayer mode is a saving grace, allowing you to play against three other people on a network, or against one other person via modem. If you're a Dragon Dice aficionado and can hook up with another, you should get a lot of fun out of the game (provided, of course, that you live too far apart to hook up for the real thing).

Efforts have been made to make this more of a "computer game." There's a strategic map of the four contested terrains that comprise each battlefield (which is functionless because there's no strategic movement, as in a wargame); a

interactivity's sake, you can use your mouse to move the arm around the screen. But then you click the button again and the dice are rolled and there's your result.

SIMULATION

End of translation.

The only people who are going to be interested in this are current devotees of the solid-object game, which offers the added bonus of collectable dice. Why? A limited-edition die comes in the box, which may well give fans impetus to buy this title (if for no other reason than to get their money back by selling the die at a fantastically inflated mark-up). There aren't many other reasons.

tree strategic map of the hattlefield, with a dragen's-

e dragon lair, where eleme await the beckoning of field generals

but shouts "Here is a faithful and soher translation. of your favorite tabletop game to the computer!"

For those of you unaware of the clattering pastime, some background is in order. Dragon Dice is a fantasy combat game played with elaborate multisided dice representing armies on a battlefield. The setting for this contest is an epic struggle between the good Elder Races of coral elves and dwarven Vagha, and the evil upstart races formed by Death (that old troublemaker) of lava elves and goblins. Each race fields a variety of individualized units such as warriors, archers, knights, and conjurers, who are further supported by monsters and dragons to form a battle legion.

Decision-making consists largely of choosing the right time to unleash magic-which involves committing every unit's dice-roll into one grab

for spell points-and deciding which moments are ripe for a fiery dragon attack. It's not a Heroes of Might and Magic-style wargame, though. All of the action is decided by dice rolls. whether it be melee attack, missile attack, or magic.

That's why it's hard to review Dragon Dice for the PC without simply resorting to a review of Dragon Dice for the tabletop. There's been nothing added, subtracted, or augmented in converting the tabletop experience to

Roll the thrones

graphical representation of the individual units (functionless because they're only stand-ins for dice symbols); an impressive dragon's lair (functionless because it's just a place to hold your dragon dice): et cetera

ad infinitum. In short, the artistically enchanting interface is

largely useless in gameplay. All you're doing is what you'd be doing with physical Dragon Dicerolling them. And when you roll dice, that's exactly what you do: You click the mouse and watch a dragonesque arm shake his dice in one clawed hand.

Oh, for Two armies line up to throw down

GAMEPLAY: C+ GETTING STARTED: Bolo GRAPHICS : C+ SOUND CHECK: C MULTIPLAYER: B

> No more fun than the tabletop game, and without the fun of collectability. Internlay

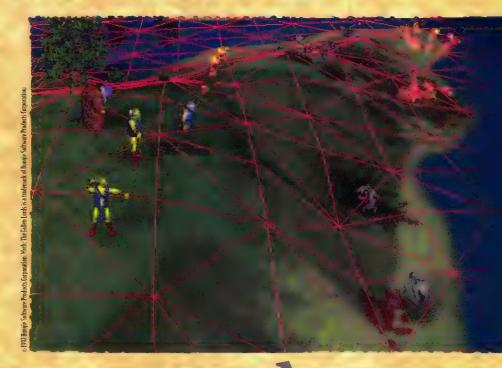
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800-468-3775 www interplay com Win 95 CD PLATFORM: 4860X/66, 8MB RAM. REDURES: 40MB HD, 2x CD-ROM drive RECOMMENDED: Pentium, 16MB RAM STREET PRICE:

▼ Get lucky dice rolls. ▼ Include a magic unit as one of the three members of each of your armies W Magic attempts require that you convert all of an army's forces into one dice roll, so be judicious V Find a Dragon Dice collector who'll fork over \$100 for the I mited-edition die that comes in the box. You can actually make a tidy profit on your purchase of this game

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Links LS 1998 Edition

By Daniel Morris



ast year's Links LS was the kind of bombshell that comes very rarely in a gaming genrea game that not only set a new bar for the competition, but pretty much took the contest to a whole new arena.

Now Access has gone and raised the bar again with

Links LS '98, which is all its predecessor was and then some. Here's what they kept: the best and most convincing ball flight/roll physics; challenging shot-making that requires the development of real touch and finesse (as opposed to simply becoming proficient with a measured swing meter); and astounding graphics that thoroughly immerse you in the golf course.

Here's what they added: faster rendering for each screen, saving some of the time it took to draw up

your next shot; simplified and expanded LAN/Internet options to allow for up to eight players; scrambles and alternateshot play formats; two new golfer animations; and a wonderful feature that puts the other players in your foursome on the screen with you as you take your shot. This means that in a match with Arnold Palmer, you'll face the nerve-wracking pressure of chipping and putting with one of the game's greats studying you up close and personal.

If you're a real-world golfer, the subtle qualities that separate Links from the rest of the pack will be clear. In a very uncanny way, Links LS '98 requires that you develop a "golf sense" that other titles don't. It won't be enough to mentally calculate, "Okay, I'm 23 yards from the pin, so I need to stop my swing meter here," because this type of approach won't



get you in the hole. An astonishingly intuitive sense of what the ball does. what the greens do, and what you can do with your club begins to take root after you play enough rounds. You start to "groove" a swing, learn-

ing from past shots, rather than just counting off marks. Eventually, you may find yourself at the delightful point where you're hitting, chipping, and putting without really paying much attention to the

the minimum suggested Pentium 90 is the bare minimum indeed. You'll want to be up in the P-hundreds to get good performance.

SPORTS

Still, Links LS '98 is worth every megabyte of its hefty hard-drive appetite. This is a game you can play every day and will simply never tire of. With full support of all previous Links SVGA courses (in addition to the four included), there are plenty of places to let the clubs fly, Links LS '98 belongs in every golfer's bag.

Best of all, this normally pricey \$79.95 game is available for \$49.95 via direct order at Access'



marks on your swing meter. You'll play much more by feel, bypassing the artificial measured analysis that often saps much of the realism and fun from a PC golf game.

This year's caveats are the same as last year's. Links LS '98 requires a whopping 218MB of disk space for its full install, which is pretty much what you need to get the most out of the game. (For instance, the full install allows you to play and connect without the disk, which saves all kinds of hassle in multiplayer mode.) There's still no course editor, which is perhaps the biggest strike against it, given the amount of fun to be had modeling courses on Jack Nicklaus 4's excellent editor. And

Pay attention to five teall on cities to fears where you need to be aim



fun on a PO

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 Open the top-view camera window TIPS V Upen the top whom to attack a course from a strategic, course-management approach. ▼ Resist the urge to over-hit. It's always preferable to go up a club and take some heat off your swing-you'll be more accurate. ▼ Once on the green, start thinking in terms of a two-putt. Your first putt just needs to be close, so that the second is easy. You'll find yourself getting into trouble if you try too hard to cup the first putt and end up with an impossible second

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X-COM: Apocalypse

By Peter Olafson



exture. This elusive property is a thing of movies, novels, and stage plays. Computer games often miss it—they lack the cohesion that is its most basic quality—and that's especially true with strategy games, which tend to burn most brightly only in the heat of action. So prepare to be dazzled.

X-COM: Apocalypse sees the return of the original design/coding team of Nick and Julian Gallop, and it's a regular monument to strategy-game texture.

It's 2084, and the aliens of X-COM: UFO Defense and Terror of the Deep are making a comeback. Using interdimensional gates, they're warping into the Earth's last habitable enclave—the isometric, amusement park—like city of MegaPrimus—and the citizens have begun to feel the none-too-subtle weight of a mounting hostile presence. Something bad is happening, and something's got to be done.

As commander of the X-COM force committed to the city's defense, you're the jack-of-all-trades deemed the de facto savior. You'll have to lead your "squaddhes" through tactical combat; conduct timely research (much of it founded in what's salvaged after successful missions); stay on good terms with the local Powers That Be (you start out at odds with the alien-worshipping Cult of Sirius); expand your base and build new ones; handle the hiring and firing of staff; and make frugal shopping expeditions to keep the firm's storerooms well-stocked.

Here's the big change: The traditionally turnbased X-COM has gained an optional "real-time" mode in which everyone—your squaddies, the



alien baddies, and a wealth of panicky noncombatants—acts at the same time.

Fortunately, it works, and it's not all that tar removed from the feel of the turn-based game, minus its limitations. The intelligent use of user-configurable interrupts—events that auto-

matically kick the game into Pause—
effectively turns Apocalypse
into a real-time game

with turns. It's a natural step. You

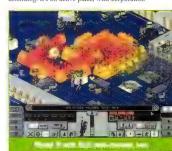
never have to worry about how far you can go; you just worry about what bit of alien nastiness is going to turn the corner about of you and whether you can shoot it down before it brain-sucks your squaddie. You don't think m terms of action points. You just do what you want.

For true X-COM believers, the beloved turnbased game is here as well. But I found Apocalypse the most realistic, atmospheric X-COM yet, and I can't imagine going back to turns. Getting acclimated may take time, but both variations of play format

> and a lot more are described at splendid length in a 200-page manual and a 17-page Rookies' Guide.

In Mythos' earlier X-COMs, the tactical battle—an ominous game of hide-and-seek with bug guns—was everything, and the nonbattle world was addressed by a series of disembodied screens with a rather fleeting relationship to the core game. In X-COM: Apocalypse, you're always in the game—not just when you're in combat.

That has a lot to do with a distinct aspect of the game world: the scrolling art-deco city you're defending. It's an active place, with corporation-



specific complexes, earthbound and airborne traffic, and an all-too-frail infrastructure—and part of the battle will be fought over its bright buildings and network of highways.

Consider: Intercepting incoming aliens has always been a sort of outside-the-game exercise in abstract images. Here, you actually see them emerge from the dimension gates, and you watch your ships try to shoot them down as they dodge between slum and splendor.





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STRATEGY





I love this part of the game. I even love it when I'm getting creamed. The rooms (including conference

Or not. The cityscape is densely built-up and highly combustible. If your interceptors' (Buck Rogers-like rocket ships used for transportation and combat) aim is off the mark, you may find yourself carving hunks out of buildings and taking down whole sections of elevated highway. Indoors, a rogue laser or grenade blast may set off a spectacular conflagration.

It's in and around buildings that we find the meat of the game: the tactical scenar-

ios. Every so often, you'll be called out on an alert-an alien's been spotted, and where there's one, there are bound to be others. You can dispatch up to six squads, each with up to six members, each of whom can crawl, kneel, run. jump, and even fly

through these isometric, multilevel environments. Kill or stun the resident aliens, and you'll own the battlefield, with results that feed nicely into the three areas of research back at the base.

rooms, power stations, and tenement hallways) are done up in delightful detail. The game handles switching between varving elevations rationally with the Page Up/Page Down keys. I'd read some unflattering things about the AI before the game surfaced. but I found

the Medium

difficulty setting

challenging, and was happy to see that the aliens have a self-preservation instinct (they'll turn and run when overmatched). And you can wreak havoc on a scale I haven't seen since Bedlam. Burn,

I know it's all the rage, but I don't really care about the lack of multiplayer support. (Sure, it might be fun, and the turn-based mode makes it a natural, but the game's fun as it is.) I'm down on computer-game music lately, but I found the score here perfectly muted and appropriate.

Apocalypse isn't perfect, but where I had problems, they were minor, and better classified as pet peeves. On that note, that fat manual needs an index. Destroyed buildings shouldn't cast shadows. The in-game encyclopedia should display full graphics-not just a top-of-thescreen fragment that sometimes appears. The craft that takes my squaddies to a mission location has this weird thing about leaving without them after a mission. The more apocalyptic animations tend to crawl, even on a speedy system. An editor

> would be nice. And once I began to stretch out into the surrounding city and build a second base, I found myself wishing I could shunt some of my administrative responsibilities onto a hired hand (a la Master of Orion II).

Finally, there's the interface: Though it quickly becomes second nature, it's a bit tricky at first. And it's a little too micromanagement-oriented in spots; it could have benefited from an "All" gadget that'd let you select all squaddies at once, and an auto-equip button to supply rookie X-COM agents with the standard kit.

But that's just my way of saving I don't want Apocalypse to be over. This isn't just a neat new twist on an old saw. It's simply the best X-COM game to date.



with the heavy-duty weapons. Vit's possible to trap your squaddies and burn up the very parts of the building you need to access. ▼ Money may prove fairly tight early in the game, so buy only what you need. V Don't adopt the meat-grinder approach with your troopers. As they grow in experience, they'll get better at what they do, so save before each mission or raid and let them live to fight another day Avoid causing mass explosions with ill-considered shooting when there are combustible items around! It comes out of your score, and it makes the Powers unhappy Their unhappiness, if unchecked, will have a tangible impact on your own

STRATEGY

Pacific General

By Steve Klett

Conquer the US, Japan, or both

SI's Panzer General was the first wargame that kept me up to the wee hours of the morning. As I played it, continually taking "just one more turn," I couldn't help but visualize good follow-up titles-an Allied version would be cool. or better still, a title set in the Pacific theater...

Like the game that started it all, PacGen is an addictive World War II strategy-fest that captures the feel of the period and never forgets the following mantra: fun over absolute realism.

Pacific General aims to re-create the epic battle for control of the Pacific between the combined Allied forces and Japan in WWII. Perhaps the best feature of the game-and the biggest leg up on PG and Allied General for sure-is that you aren't limited to playing one side of the conflict. You can play a complete campaign as either the Japanese or the Americans.



The campaigns occasionally break away from history and offer the chance to take part in some "what if" scenarios, such as Japan's possible invasion of the US via San Francisco, and the potential US invasion of Japan. The campaigns still hold true to reality in the big picture. For example, things are tough on the Americans at first but get easier as the US's industrial war machine cranks up. The opposite is true for Japan, as was the case historically; but if you do well enough early on you can stop the US from really getting on its feet.

As with all previous 5-Star Series games, each scenario is composed of a preset number of turns in which you must capture a certain number of objective hexes to win and advance. Finish early and you earn more Prestige points, which translates into more dinero for replacements and new

units down the road. Completing either campaign can take any number of the available scenarios (all of which can also be played individually), depending on your successes and failures as the war progresses.

Perhaps the second-coolest addition PacGen brings to the series is a major overhaul of the

naval combat system. Ships are drawn in all shapes and sizes, submarines can dive and launch surprise attacks, and aircraft carriers can launch and receive airplanes to refuel and rearm. Using your observation planes and destroyers to scout ahead of the fleet and find the enemy first is crucial to success. As a result, battling at sea is just as fun as battling on land.

The scenario maps are also beautifully drawn, and water is shaded to reflect changes in depth, which makes island-hopping battles with fleets of aircraft carriers and battleships a challenge. Head-to-head play is provided via modem, network, and email.

What's wrong with PacGen? Not a lot. The use of only American period music is a minor bummer, made even more conspicuous by the inclusion of slightly different interfaces for the American and Japanese campaigns: Where's the Japanese music? You still occasionally get heavy casualty results that appear to make no sense-but not often, and such are the fortunes of war. PacGen's biggest weakness, perhaps, is that despite all the new features, it still basically looks and plays like its older siblings.





If you're looking for a whole new experience, it may be best to hold out for Panzer General II. But if you're craving more of that same core PG experience that kept you burning the midnight oil, your prayers have been answered with Pacific General.

GAMEPLAY: B

GRAPHICS: B

\$40

GETTING STARTED: C

MULTIPLAYER: B



SOUND CHECK: B-

If you liked Panzer General, you'll enlow this worthy successor.

> 800-601-7529 www.pacrficgeneral.com P90, 16MB RAM, 60MB HD. 1MB SVGA card, 4x CD-ROM drive 14.4 modem or faster for head-to-head play

Den't forget that you don't have to move a unit immediately after firing it You can fire, then move other units until a more advantageous position opens up later. Remembering this is key to early and decisive victories. V Use combined-arms tactics whenever possible Bornbarding and/or bombing a city before attacking it with troops, followed up by tanks, is deadly. You may net what seems like an impossibly defended victory hex in a single turn. Concentrating each turn's attacks on a few key targets is more effective than spreading your resources. ▼ Your first step to taking a victory hex should be to place one of your units-preferably a veteran infantry unit-adjacent to it ASAP Don't attack with this unit until it's got a lot of help! Just keeping it there prevents the victory hax from resupplying or reinforcing. ▼ Let the Auxiliary units take the brunt of the casualties whenever possible, and save your replacement points for your core units. Avoid attacking any units supported by artillerytake the big guns out first ♥ Don't forget that you need to refuel and rearm your airplanes. Keep those aircraft carriers as close to the front as possible

ANADVENTURE

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- 360 degree seamless animated display
- Pealistic style puzzles with sensible interaction
- Fully animated inventory system
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"gameplay in Dogday is an exceptional piece of work"
"the atmosphere sucks you right in"+"real world style puzzles."
"sensible interaction"+"beautifully rendered"
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GAME SHORTS They say this "winomaraner" breed used to review software. Share a libation and he may stake you to a quick game of Pac-Dog.

fter a few hours with the entertaining Dogday, I felt like putting on a collar and leash and goning outside for a walk. Australian newcomer EYST Pty Ltd. is definitely barking up the right tree with its debut graphic adventure.

Even so, I don't quite get the canine connection here. The background story sets up a kind of Big Brother Bowser regime that is oppressing the Pupin-the-Street. You're a doggie dissident who must get to the opposing forces (appropriately named CATS) with information that will expose the government as a truly "bad dog." The four-legged stance lightens up the dark atmosphere with humor

Dogday

and graphic novelty; but Dogday's espionage intrigues could have worked just as well with human characters.

No matter. When it comes to what's important-gameplay-Dogday really sits up and shakes hands, combining some of the best features of gaming past and present.

Like the adventure games I cut my teeth on, Dogday's puzzles play fair. They're logical and rewarding to solve. Combining object-oriented brainteasers

(use A on B) and Myst-like manipulation challenges (throw the switches in the right order), Dogday fetches plenty of variety. There's even an arcade with playable machines-Puss Invaders and Pac-Dog.

At the same time, this dog has learned some new techno-tricks. Like other gamers, I've come to regard "full-motion video" (FMV) as the interactive F-word. Here, it works. All the transitions between locations are presented in FMV, but at such a brisk pace that I never felt a sense of tedium. Owners of 4x drives may occasionally experience momentary pauses to accommodate

A fetching graphic adventure

CD loads. However, gamers who are low on hard-disk space will appreciate that Dogday plays entirely from the CD-ROM.

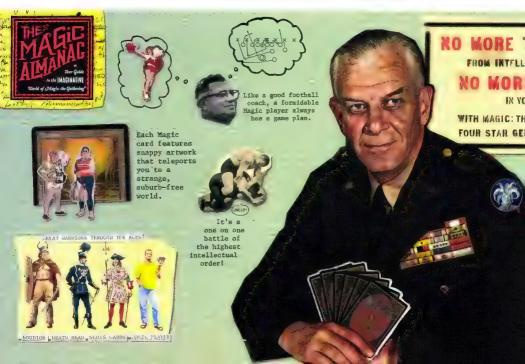
If Dogday lacks anything, it's character. You encounter one-dimensional mute mutts in your explorations-a perfect example of where a little dialogue could have bolstered the fantasy. Otherwise, the game sets up and maintains an engaging, involving atmosphere.

Good dog, Dogday. -Bob Lindstrom



RECOMMENDED.

STREET PRICE:



Microsoft Entertainment Pack: The Puzzle Collection

ow, which games do you think Microsoft is best known for? Hellbender? Monster Truck best known for? Hellbender? Monster Truck Solitaire and Minesweeper, and Microsoft knows it. To its credit, it doesn't shy away from the timewasting game category—far from it. The Puzzle Collection serves up 10 near little diversions from the humdrum of daily life and nightly fragging. Whatever your skill level, you'll likely find some of these addictive—although a couple others may seem pointless.

Great plane-trip fodder

You'll recognize the object-dropping-fast touch of Alexev Patjinov, Tetris' creator, in a few of these games. Charmer revisits the falling things of Tetris, except that this time it's pots dropping onto an Indian snake; play a flute under the snake and he'll rise up to bust the pot lid. Fringer uses the same motif in a twisted-rope puzzle that demands fast reflexes, the ability to think ahead, and (unfortu-

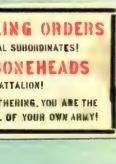
nately) the ability to quickly figure out the convoluted moving method.

Others involve different spatial relationships. Rat Poker is a fun little jape that has you line up colored rats running around a maze; get three of the same color in a row, and they'll ease congestion by leaving the maze. You may start off slow, but soon you're frantically juggling moveable rat traps and lining up colors. Sure beats having to do it in your own kitchen.

Some of the games you can do without: Finty Flush's marble drop is too monotonous, and Lineup is a poor man's Tetris clone. But others are hopelessly addictive: Color Collision's simple matchups of floating shapes to balls of the same color is more maddening than you'd guess, and I defy anyone not to spend major amounts of time in Jewel Chase's Pac-Man-style environment, running around colored mazes for treasure and trying to thwart the other thiel. It only takes one cool game to justify a package like The Puzzle Collection, and there's more than that here. —Don St. John



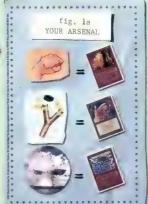




Magic brings divergent groups together in the spirit of competition. Group hug everybody!

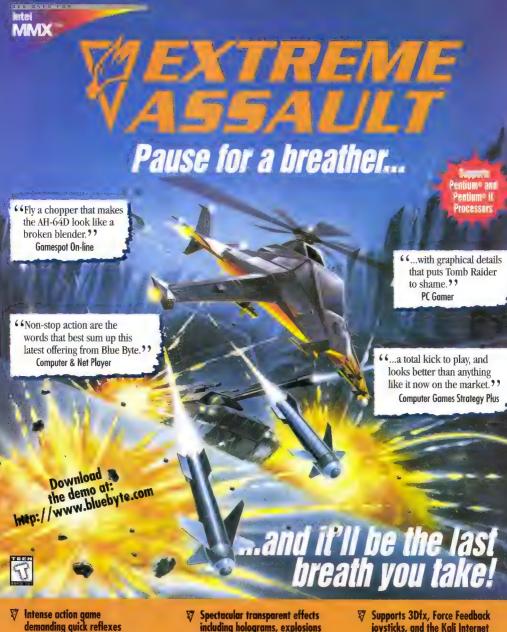






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GAME SHORTS



GAMES

very decade since the 1940s has seen a prediction of robots with human intelligence right around the corner (though why we should strive for human intelligence is beyond me, given how the average human drives). The only results have been mechanical rats in mazes that are pretty boring company, even on

a Wednesday night.

Until now. Creatures is a marvelously designed toy and a glimmer of light into the possibilities of artificial intelligence.

The "creatures" referred to are Norns. You initially hatch them from six eggs enclosed with the original game. (Additional Norn packs can be downloaded from the developer's Web site.) With your aid, they quickly learn 14 words (such as get,

Creatures

stop, and push) after birth. Then you can introduce your pet to new objects and interactions, disciplining and rewarding it with spanks and tickles. Your Norn will

truly learn and even make reasonable deductions on its own.

In time, when Norns mature, they mate and give birth to genetically mixed offspring with variegated traits. Ultimately they die of old age within 10 game hours, assuming illness doesn't strike first. However, some Creature players have bred the occasional "Highlander" gene (I'm not joking), which produces Norns that rarely grow sick and have a life span up to 10 times the norm.

Creatures offers colorful SVGA 2D environments in minijungles, deserts, mining shafts, and oceans. There are many little interactive toys, musical instruments, foods, weeds, and the occasional enemy Grendel for your Norns to discover.

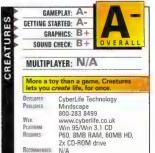
Applets for health, science, and fertility do everything from measuring areas of mental stimuli to producing emotional response graphs. A registra-

Your computer's alive!

tion applet lets you name a newborn and take its snapshot, while a graveyard applet lets you attach the snapshot to a marker, with suitable inscriptionan interesting way to brighten your desktop.

Most games offer sophisticated but frozen AI; Creature's Norns grow and evolve. That's the product's crowning distinction, but the humor, graphics, and genetic variations make this toy endless fun.

-Barry Brenesal



Muzzle Velocity

argame publishers have been slow to adopt 3D technology to this most 2D of genres. With few exceptions, wargames are still flat as pancakes, and if you ever really "get into" a game, it's more by virtue of its tactical complexities than feeling a part of it.

Digi4Fun is trying to amend that drawback with an epic World War II wargame-cum-military sim that aims to couple conventional 2D strategy with the immersion (and fun) of 3D action. And they've been at least partly successful.

Feel the responsibility of a war commander

Set on the Western Front in 1944 to 1945, MV allows you to play dozens of missions as the Germans, Americans, or British, either individually or in a career mode. On the strategic 2D screens, you click on an easy-to-grasp menu system to place your troops, assign waypoints, and hand out orders.

Then hit Return to zap into the highlighted unit in 3D mode-whether it's a squad of soldiers



(wielding machine guns and bazookas) or a platoon of German Panthers. And off you go-rumbling through open countryside populated by the odd cow, up modest hills, along tree-lined roads, and through built-up cities you can destroy.

Because you're surrounded by the very units you're commanding, MV is extremely immersive; in fact, it's one of the few wargames involving artillery and air power where I truly felt personally involved and part of a combined effort. I got an invaluable sense of responsibility in MV that I won't soon forget.

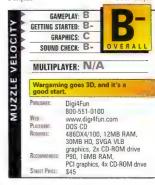
But it's easy to see where the game could have been improved. Primitive graphics (especially in the 2D modes), woeful off-line documentation, and a languid AI that tends to opt for Doom's nose-to-

October 1997 - PC GAMES

nose combat in tactical situations don't inspire. Your troops also seem to have inordinate problems maneuvering around buildings, and don't even know enough to move out of the way of the noncombatant trucks that ply the roads.

STREET PRICE:

All in all, in its 3D aspect, Muzzle Velocity is pretty much a shoot-'em-up. Even so, it's an engaging, participatory shoot-'em-up, and I'd love to see a sequel. -Peter Olafson



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Wild Ride!

To enable the cheats, type holyheck! anytime during gameplay. A dialog box will box up that lets you select the following:

re-entry: Lets you back in the contest after you've been kicked out.

score: Free points.

summon semjase: Summons

UFO.

beach nav mode: Makes the beach scene navigable.

tron mode: Like it says. extra life: Like it says.

cheat keys numpad: Enables use of the in-game cheat keys on the number pad:

- 1: Wipe out.
- 2: Wipe out and lose a life.
- 3: Slow down.
- 9: Speed up.





Extreme Assault

At the main menu, type ohdear to enable the cheats. You can now use these key combos in the game:

Alt-1: Full ammo.

Alt-2: Weapon upgrade.

Alt-4: God mode.

Alt-6: End mission.

Alt-7: Deactivate enemies.

Alt-8: Change to helicopter mode.

Alt-9: Change to tank mode.

Alt-10: Speed boost.





X-COM Appropriate

There are no built-in cheat codes for the final version of X-COM: Apocalypse, says MicroProse. But they've supplied us with these handy tips for the game's stickier points. Now there's no excuse for defeat.

- Try to develop Toxin Guns ASAP, as they will penetrate Personnel Disruptor Shields, killing aliens and leaving their Shields intact.
- Agents can wear two Personnel Disruptor Shields for double protection. This will protect them from two blasts from a Vortex Mine, a couple of Poppers, or one hit from a Dimension Missile.
- To kill a Multiworm, get a few hits and then use a grenade to finish it off: the blast will kill any emerging Hyperworms. You'll need to practice this to get a feel for how many hits you need to make before using the grenade.
- Psi-morphs can be very dangerous to your squad members, who don't have good Psi-defense abilities. Use Android Agents to kill or capture them. Remember that Psionics only work on line of sight; use this to your advantage.
- Megaspawns are equipped with a Devastator Cannon and Dimension Missile-equivalents.
 There are two ways to kill them: get in quick and close with autofire from a Devastator Cannon or a Toxin Gun, or fly above them and drop a Vortex Mine.
- Constantly check the Alien Infiltration Screen for which orga-

nization is being infiltrated, then go to its building and check for said infiltration.

- Raiding hostile organizations is a good source of income. So is raiding the gangs, who make Psiclone, which can be sold for thousands of dollars. Be careful not to raid too often, however: a hostile organization may locate and raid your own base.
- Many alien buildings have 'orange square structures inside that are used to teleport new

aliens into the building. Destroy these transporters with a couple of Vortex Mines to limit the number of aliens you have to kill.

- Become allies with S.E.L.F. and the Mutant Alliance to guarantee a good supply of Android and Mutant recruits. The Androids are good basic units, while the Mutants have the best attacking Psionic Skills.
- If a Brainsucker pod lands near you, try to pick it up (this will prevent it from hatching).

A GOOD 7TH LEGION RECRUIT ALWAYS SALUTES HIS VICTIM.



SCREEN through combet strategy and savor every DUT-WRENCHING moment of annihilating your enemy. With rage in your veins and ASSASSINATION on the brain, be prepared to command this 7th Legion battalion in the ultimate UNTAMED DEATH FEST. Because once you're in-it's all about balls-to-the-wall real-time combat action, where "paying your respects" is done with a dignified SINGLE FINGER SELVING.











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Betrayal in Antara

During the game, hit Ctrl + Shift + Z, then type one of these codes:

some call me tim: Kills all foes (only used in combat).

gotta have magic: Gives Aren all the spells.

man does my leg hurt: Heals the party.

STACTICS

Gnm==be-1

While flying, press r, then type one of the following:

ratz: Makes you invisible.

cowz: Freezes time for all non-human players for 30 seconds.

ipig: Gives you 99 of all available weapons.

cat9: Repairs your damage.

dog9: Reloads all weapons.

bat9: Loads 10 GPS Hellfires.



Most Requested

Tomb Raider

Try these cheats during a game:

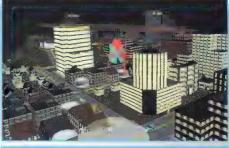
For all weapons and full ammo: (1) While holding down the Shift key, take one step forward, then one step backward. (2) Release Shift and turn 360 degrees to the right three times (without pausing). (3) Now jump backward (Alt-Down).

To skip to the next level, follow steps (1) and (2) above, then jump forward (Alt-Up) instead of backward.

Note: You may have to try these cheats a few times before you get 'em to work. Standing next to a wall or facing a fixed landmark will make it easier to gauge whether or not you've made a full 360-degree turn.



Command 9 Conquer: Red Alert and Diabto have no built-in cheat codes. But strategies for both games are on our Web site: www.pcgames.com. Check 'em cut.



SimCopter

During the game, type Ctrl-Alt-X, then enter one of these codes (they're case-sensitive):

Been there, done that: Finishes the level.

Gas does grow on trees: Gives copter full tank of gas.

Give me bucks or give me

death: XXXXX (where XXXXX is a number between 0 and 50,000): Gives you the specified amount of money or immediately shuts down the game without a chance to save. The more money you ask for, the greater the chance of shutdown.

I love my helicopter: Teleports you into your helicopter.

I'm the CEO of McDonnell Douglas: Type 1 through 9 in copter catalog to get that copter. Type all numbers to get all conters.

Lights, Camera, Action!: Plays a "smacker" movie on the drive-in screens of your city.

The map, please: Brings up the map window in Walk Mode.

Shields up: Prevents your helicopter from taking damage.

superpowermultiply: Changes your avatar into a dog that moves very fast when you hold down the Shift key.

Warp me to career: xx (xx = city number 0–30): During a career game only, lets you warp to any career city.

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WINDOWS 95 & MAC OS CD-ROM





STRATEGY & TACTICS

Ivinsen's Og Walkingu

With its big, beautiful worlds and wondrous gameplay, Twinsen's Odyssey is quite a package. A deceptively difficult package, as well. But why worry? We've enlisted Marty Stratton, the game's producer, to guide you through the entire game with this exclusive walkthrough. Whether you're stuck in the refinery, confused by the Wannies, or just want to fight the hero of Time Commando, we'll show you how.

Starting on Planet Twinsun:

- •In Twinsen's house, grab key from chest next to the door and enter the room. Grab ball, holomap, and darts.
- ·Go to the pharmacy and talk to the store owner.
- ·Follow the short woman outside. Talk to her.
- •Using Discreet mode, sneak up on the man by the statue. Tell him to give you the umbrella.
- •Give umbrella to the short woman. Go to the museum and speak to Mrs. Bloop. Go back outside and sneak in through the museum's upper window.
- Press red button on desk. Pull lever on the right side of desk, and run down to the tunic.
- ·Go to the weather wizard's tent and talk to him.



- •Go to the cave entrance near the wood bridge.
- •In second cave, to unlock the gate in the empty cell, stand up against the barrels and throw the ball into the switch.
- ·Go to the next cave.
- Jump onto broken ladder, and continue hitting forward arrow key to climb the ladder.
- •To open the locked gate, jump onto the ledge and throw the ball over the little fence.
- •Go to next cave. Kill first small Tralu for a key. Jump across gap to get to next area. Kill second small Tralu for a second key. Jump across spikes and gaps to get to next area. Go through both locked doors and enter next room. Kill the big Tralu for a key. Talk to the lighthouse keeper and exit the cell.
- •Walk with Zoe to the lighthouse.

[THE ESMERS ARRIVE]

•Buy a ferry ticket and take ferry to Desert Island.



- ·Go to Ker'oaac's house and talk to his housekeeper. Search the shelf for Gallic acid and grab it.
- •Collect 120 kashes by throwing darts at the ducks at Temple Park. If you win the game, you'll get balloons that drop you into a shaft, where you can collect kashes.
- ·Go to the magic school (in the cemetery). The door is locked, so walk around the side of the hill to the left and, by the two dead trees, enter the cemetery. Enter the magic school through the face in the side of the mountain.
- •Run through the "ghost gauntlet" in Sporty mode, then use Discreet mode to get a key from the chest.
- •Use key to go through the locked gate. Talk to the Rector and join the school.
- •Walk to the first door and take the first test. After passing the test, leave the room: you are given the blowgun.
- •Go to Baldino's (back in the main city) and get a car part. Buy a ferry ticket and go to Citadel Island. Give the part to Zoe.
- •Buy ferry ticket and go to Desert Island.
- •Go to Baldino's and talk to him to get the radio.



- ·Leave Baldino's; Zoe will tell you the car is ready. Go pick it up near the ferry. (Tip: If you take the car to the racetrack and beat the driver there-it isn't easy-you'll get a free life.)
- •Go to where the Balsam plant is and jump the ramp with the car, Grab the Balsam plant and jump back over the ramp to get back. Return to the magic school and give the Balsam plant to the Rector. He'll give you the Horn of the Blue Triton. (Tip: Outside, in the cemetery, use the conch to heal the clam. You'll get a free life.)
- Buy ferry ticket and go to Citadel Island, Use the Horn on Dino-Fly, spitting out six hearts to heal
- •Ask Dino-Fly to take you to the island with the Dome of the Slate.
- . Enter the maze and walk through to the finish. remembering to look at the map to the side of the entrance.
- •The Rector shows up and gives you the slate.
- •Walk around the dome to the ladder. Ask Dino-



Desert Island.

- •Go to the magic school and talk to the Rector. He'll give you the diploma.
- •Collect 50 kashes. Talk to the guy on the magic carpet. Show him the diploma for the wizard's tunic.
- ·Go to the Hacienda and talk to the Esmer by the men's steam room. He'll take you on a spaceship; once there, grab the translator on the floor of the ship.

Now, on Planet Zeelich:

- · After ship lands, follow soldiers to the doors and enter the right door.
- •When guard opens cell door, kill him to escape. •Throw the switch on the upper catwalk to free





the dissident.

- Hit big red switches to turn shields off. Go out bottom door and destroy the robot to blow a hole in the fence.
- Run through the dog-training yard and enter the smaller of the two buildings.



- •Run to the lift and drop down the left one.
- Once you've exited the building, go to the control tower. Kill all the enemies and steal the discshaped itinerary token from the top of the tower. Get into the shuttle and use the token in the slot.

Now, back on Planet Twinsun:

- After crash landing, go to your house and talk to Zoe.
- Go to the warehouse. Where you can retrieve your crate with the mechanical helicopter, push crate through the maze of lifts and conveyor belts, or pay the worker 102 kashes to do it for you.

SECRET: Where worker offers you his help, go down the ladder, then up the lift to the elevated conveyor belt belt. Jump off conveyor belt to get the key out of the brown box with the red plus sign on it. Use key to open the locked door. Jump onto first brown box you come to, then across to two green crates, then to the single green crate. Jump into elevated door. Inside, flip switches to get box with 102 kashes.



- Once the crate is back in the main lobby, grab proto-pack out of it.
- Take Dino-Fly to Desert Island. Return to the magic school and talk to the Rector.

- •Go to where the ferry used to dock. There are boxes on the right side of the dock; go around those to the little dock with the bell. Ring bell and ride the turtle into the cave. Use the protopack to fly over spikes and grab incandescent pearl. Get back onto turtle, hop off onto docks.
- Take Dino-Fly back to Citadel Island. Go to your neighbor's house and give him the Gallic acid. He'll give you the pyramid key.
- •Go to the weather wizard's tent and use the pearl in the boiling pot to get the lightning spell. Next to the bed, flip the lever and crawl through the secret passage to the sewer. Jump on one of the floating platforms; after two turns, jump off the upper side of the platform where you see the box with the red plus sign on it. Run into box to get a key, Jump back onto a floating platform. After one turn, jump off into doorway into a secret room. Inside, open chest to get magic points, which you'll need to use the lightning spell. (Note: Don't use magic ball until you've used the lightning spell; you'll need your magic points for that spell.) Go back out and jump onto a floating platform. After one turn, jump off onto pathway to open the pas-



sage back to the wizard's tent. Crawl through passage into tent.

- •Go to Chez Luc's and, behind the bar, search the keg for a key. Use key in the locked door and enter cellar. Between some boxes there's a hole in the floor. Drop down through it into the sewer.
- Place the pyramid key on the gold disc on the floor to open the central room. Enter central room and use the lightning spell to obtain Sendel's Ball. Exit room and Baldino calls you on radio.
- •Take Dino-Fly to Desert Island. Enter the
 Temple of Bu through Temple Park. Jump onto
 the cart. Hit (with magic ball) the second switch
 you come to. Hit the fifth switch you come to.
 After you go down a level, hit all the switches
 you come to. Stay on the cart until you're
 within jumping distance of the box with the red
 plus sign on it. Jump to the box for a key. In

The Protective Spell

The protective spell is located on the island across from the Hacienda. You can see the entrance to the island by looking through the telescope on the top of the Hacienda. To get the protective spell (very helpful in later portions of the game):

- First, you must have the proto-pack.
- Either have Dino-Fly take you to the island or use your proto-pack to fly to the island over the ocean.
- •The entrance to the island cave is in a small lagoon. You'll need the protopack to fly over the water and into that cave. Once you have entered the cave and are still flying, you must avoid the bats. If they hit you while you are proto-packing, they'll knock you into the water.
- Once you have reached dry land inside the cave, fight the skeletons and push the box on the floor over to the elevator platform. Leave the platform down.
- Jump across the gap from the lever to the opposite elevator (not the one with the box on it), and use your magic ball to flip the switch and raise the elevator you are standing on.
- Push the box on the upper level over the edge and onto the other box waiting at the bottom of the elevator so the boxes are stacked.
- Jump down and stand on top of the two boxes. Use your magic ball and Discreet mode to flip the lever for that elevator, raising you and the boxes to the upper door.
- Once you have passed through the upper door, fight the skeletons and then the large monster. When you beat the monster, the bars to the protective spell open, and you can grab it.
- Use your proto-pack to fly out of the cave along the canal, but remember that the bats will knock you into the water. Your best bet is to fight the bats from dry land, then protopack across the water when the bats are gone.

STRATEGY & TACTICS

the same room, there's a ladder at the bottom. Climb down it and go through the doors.

•Kill the sleeping guards. Inspect the clothes on the nightstand for a key. Go through the locked door and up the elevator. Use the proto pack to get across the electric bridge. Once across, turn off switch. Kill guard for a key. Get itinerary token from orange container. Go to shuttle and use token in the slot.

Now, on Emerald Moon:

- •Password is Code Operation GREEN MOON.
- There are two structures—enter the one with the diamond over the door. Inside, set the three switches to green. Look at the map to the right

GENERAL TIPS

Keep in mind that your behavior modes alter the way you use a weapon. If you need to hit a switch on the other side of a wall, for example, you'll want to lob the ball in Discreet mode, rather than fire it in Aggressive.

The Conch of the Blue Triton doesn't just cure Dino-Fly: you can use it to heal yourself, too. When you come across health power-ups (e.g., red hearts) and your health is full, access the Conch and use it to store the power-ups. Then, when you need them, simply fire them from the Conch and use them for health.

You can use your magic ball as a boomerang to pick up keys that fall out of reach. Throw the ball toward a key that's on the other side of a fence, and it'll bring the key back to you.

The sidestep key is pretty important. When you're in heavy combat, depending on your behavior and weapon, you can use combinations of the sidestep key and arrow keys for a variety of special moves. Experiment with these moves so you know how to use 'em come fighting time.

If you come to an enemy you can't kill, go around him. When you find a weapon that's more powerful, you can go back and take him out.

•Go through the door.

•Throw switches to right and left of door and run/jump over the steam. Go up elevator and throw the switch.

·Go up elevator and throw switch again.

- Run and jump over the gap between the upper level and the lip of the water-holding tanks.
- Go up the "stairway of jets" and get the key.
 Continue to jump up the red pipes to upper platform. Go through the door,
- Kill the guard for a key. Throw the switch,
- •Run up stairs and through the steam vents.
- Throw both switches. Ride platform across the gap and go through the doors. Jump down one platform, throw both switches.
- Jump to elevated steam vent/jet and throw magic ball at worker to get key (use ball to collect key).
- Jump down to lower platform. Kill guard. Open gate, kill dogs in the dog yard.
- •Kill guard for key. Use Discreet mode to walk up stairs past steam vent/jet. At top of stairs, throw switch. Go through gate and grab can of gazogem from the floor and key from box on wall.
- •Exit the inside of the refinery through doors. Jump up on barrels and over the fence to exit refinery area.
- •Take hovercraft (water transport) to Otringal.
- •Take gazogem back to Baldino at the space ship. He'll give you the super proto-pack.
- Jump over the rocks and run through the dogtraining yard.

of the switches.

Emerald Moon

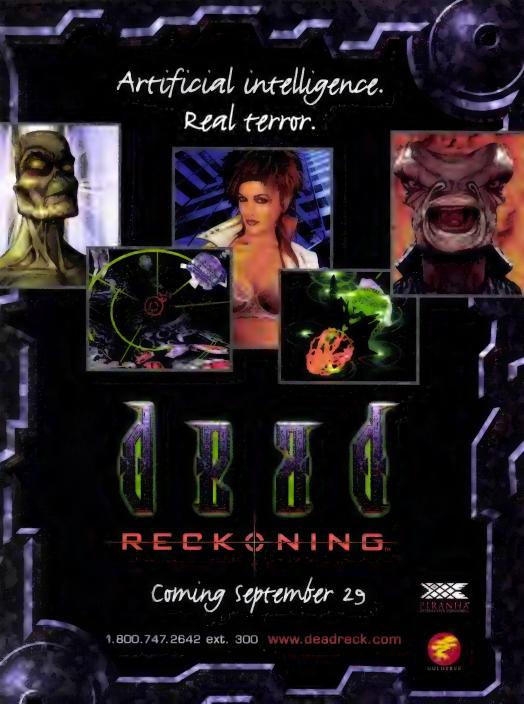
- •Enter the other structure through the door with the triangle above it.
- •Go through the door at the top of the room. Kill guard for a key. Walk up path and use key to open Baldino's cell. Talk to him.
- •Turn big wheel (at the bottom of the path to Baldino's cell) to open door. Follow Baldino.
- In next room, turn big wheel to open similar door.
- Throw red switch on pipe in elevated computer room to open door.
- •Put on space suit and follow Baldino.

Now, on Planet Zeelich:

- Jump across rocks toward dog-training yard (killing monster along the way), then run through the yard. (Tip: If you search the middle doghouse, you find a free life.) Enter the taller building and take the lift up.
- •Talk to the Gazogem station attendant.
- Collect 100 zlitos (the casino is probably your best bet).
- Talk to the one-legged man at Otringal Dock. Get on his air ferry; he takes you to Celebration Island, where you'll talk to the souvenir vendor.
- •Take air ferry back to Otringal.
- •Go to bar. Go onto the stage and go through the door in back. While backstage, throw the switches in this order—middle, left, right—to open grate on wall.
- Position pillars to allow you to jump to the nowopen grate. Go talk to Rick.
- After talking to Rick, go back to Otringal Dock and take water transport to Island of the Francos.
- •Enter first building on the left and buy the pickax.
- Take the path through town. Turn left behind the bar and walk along the coast, past the palm tree.
 Once you've passed the tree, dig in the grass with the pick for the Francos fragment.
- •Jump onto the pipes near the refinery fence; now jump over dent at top of fence to enter refinery.
- Enter the building with one guard. Once inside, kill the mechanic working on the pipes. Use magic ball to throw the switch above where the mechanic was working, Jump across the two steam vents.
- •Go up the elevator and kill the guard. Throw the switch. Go down elevator and get key.



- •Kill guard for a key. Enter the taller building and take the elevator up to downtown Otringal.
- •Run behind the casino; you'll see a small waterfall.
- Use the super proto-pack to get to the path on the other side of the waterfall. Follow this path to the Imperial Hotel.
- •Enter hotel and kill bellboy for a key that'll unlock the chain to the lower level. Talk to Johnny Rocket (the guy in the lounge chair) and follow him to his room. He'll give you the dissident's key.
- •Go to the souvenir shop (near the casino) and show ring to the shopkeeper.



STRATEGY & TACTICS

- •Talk to all the dissidents: you get the pistol-laser.
- Go back to the Otringal Docks; take air ferry to the Island of Celebration.
- Walk along path to the lava flow (along the left side of the statue). Jump over the lava using the floating platforms.
- After passing lava platforms, use the super protopack to get to the green crystals. Use the pickax to get a piece of the crystal. You'll now have a



working pistol-laser.

- Take hovercraft to the Island of the Francos.
- •Use pipes again to jump over fence. This time, enter building protected by two guards.
- Once inside, use the pistol-laser to shoot the guards and trigger the switches.
- •There are four switches that control the doors: let's number them 1 to 4, starting with the far left switch as number 1. To open the first door, switches 1, 3, and 4 must be down. To open the second door, switches 2 and 3 must be down. To open both doors, switches 2 and 4 must be down.
- ·Go through doors and get onto the air tanker.
- •Kill the assassin for a key. Enter the elevator.

The Undergas:

- In Discreet mode: Lob your magic ball over wall to kill worker, then flip left red switch, which will turn off the lower red barrier.
- Go outside and fight guards to get to the Village of the Wannies. Once you're inside the caves, go to the room with the family of Wannies.
- •Grab the Wannies' glove from the coat rack.
- After the mother Wannie says that dinner is ready, sit in the upper chair. She'll give you the firefly tart.
- Leave the family's room and give the tart to the old man in the middle of the cave. He'll give you a key.
- •Go to the chapel and talk to the monk.
- •Go to the monk's home and talk to his housekeeper. She'll give you the ferryman's song.
- Go to the cave next to the warehouse (near the undergas elevator). Collect all the gems you can (you must get at least four).
- In the second room from the entrance of the cave, there's a gap near a small animal and a cave, Jump that gap and enter next cave. There are

two Wannies working and a path in between them.

a path in terveet intin.

Take that path, which will lead you to a room with a bridge and a Wannie guarding a door. Jump the gap and kill the Wannie for a key. Enter room and grab the fragment.

- Now exit mine and go to where the ferryman pickup location is. Play the song in the little gazebo, and he'll take you to the Island of the Mosquibees.
- Talk to the Mosquibee, and he'll take you to the queen. She'll give you a test. In the test, throw your magic ball at the rocks until you get a key.
- To get the blowtron, try key on one of the three doors. If it's not the one with the blowtron, throw magic ball at the rocks again to get another key. (You may have to do this a third time.)
- •Fight your way to the hexagonal exit, then fight your way to the upper exit.
- •Run around the mountain and across the suspension bridge. Then go up the elevator.
- Use the Wanne glove (by pressing the weaponfire key) to deflect the walrus' spit back at him. Keep doing this until he dies, giving you a key. Use your magic ball to collect it.



The Queen Mosquibee

- Go back down a level and use the key in the box for the Wannie fragment.
- Take the ferryman to Volcano Island.
- Collect gems and go into the cave. Talk to the Mosquibee.
- •Take ferryman to the Island of the Wannies.
- Go to the cave next to the warehouse. Once side, go across the tracks and onto the conveyor belt,
- •Kill the switch operator and place both switches in the righthand position (important). Jump into the box.
- Jump from box onto the ladder. Jump over to the next building and drop through the hole.
- •Talk to the Queen. She'll give you the CX key.
- Throw the ball at the switch to open the gate.
- Take ferryman to the Island of the Mosquibees.
 Go to the Queen's throne room and use the CX
- key on the back of the throne.

 •Kill the guards for a key. Work your way to the shuttle-landing area. Kill another guard for a key.

- •Enter the center building. Turn wheel to open door.
- Go to next room and turn upper wheel to open next door. Go through that door and get the key.
 - •Follow the Franco over the wall (important).
- Use key in locked door.
- ·Go down elevator.
- Talk to the emperor. Kill him for a key. Use key in chest to get the emperor's sword. Go up the elevator.
- Go to the room with the two Hussons. Kill first Husson with the sword for a key. Go through the upper locked door. Climb stairs and climb ladder.
- Grab the itinerary token.
- •Go to the shuttle and place the token in the slot.
- After landing, kill the guards for a key. Enter locked gate. Enter door. You must get a key from each room before you can continue. In some rooms, you have to get the key from a chest; in others, you have to kill someone.
- Walk north until you no longer can, then walk west until you can't, then north again. (Note: If you explore other rooms, you may just find Stanley Opar, the hero from Time Commando.)
- •Fight the guards and then the two-headed monster. He'll give you a key.
- •Use the key in the chest for the Sup's fragment.
- •Exit the palace and take the air ferry to the Island of Celebration.
- Enter the temple base and place the completed monk's key in the center lava section.
- •Go outside and listen to the fake monk babble.

 He'll tell you something very interesting...
- Go around the right side of the statue and jump from pillar to pillar to get on top of the book.
 Then jump onto the hand and enter the statue.
- •Kill the Grobo that fires rockets at you.
- •Go to the four control machines (from left to right, the machines are 1 to 4). Trigger the machines in this order: 2, 1, 4, 3. Then throw the switch on the wizards' right side, releasing them.
- Go through the hole in the gate and up the elevator. After fake monk talks to you, go down the elevator and drop down the hole behind the tin Grobo.
- •Kill the rocket-shooting Grobo for a key.
- Go through locked gate. Kill the two Grobos that transport in to open floor plate. Now drop into the hole.
- •Kill rocket-shooting Grobo for a key. Go through locked gate.
- •Kill Funfrock and his robots.
- Now go toward the lava.

That's it: you've saved Twinsum from the civil Esmers. Well dense.

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TECHNOBABBLE

Pentium II Dream Team



Intergraph Pentium II TD-225

RATING: B+

eep for your once state-of-the-art P120. You knew you could withstand the onslaught of your friends' gloating over their new P150s, P166s, and P2005—faster machines, true, but not all that much faster. But with the arrival of Pentium IIs like Intergraph's TD-225, resistance is futile.

If you're actively considering dropping \$3,000 or more on a new Pentium system, you owe it to yourself to look into the TD-225. The unit we tested came with a 266MHz Pentium II, 64MB of RAM, a 17-inch monitor, a 12x CD-ROM drive, and a screamer of a Fujitsu 3052AT 5.7GB hard drive, which turns in numbers more than three times faster than our base P200. Total system price: \$3.585.

That buys you a powerhouse that turns in processor benchmarks more than double our standard P200 benches. What that means for your gameplay is less certain. Since no games in our stable have been optimized to run on this CPU, which is basically a Pentium Pro dressed up with MMX, you don't necessarily see double the performance. For example, Shadow Warrior turned in frame-per-second numbers between 35 and 65 on a trusty P200 with MMX. On the TD-225, those numbers were boosted to between

45 and 75. Outstanding performance, to be sure, but how much

better would a PII-optimized game perform?

What's certain is that the PII CPU feels beefier. Using Shadow Warrior as an example again,

there's no graphic and audio slowdown when the game boots to the demo and the MIDI track kicks in, as there is with the P200. Also, the sheer power of the processor can overcome problems that bedevil a lesser Pentium. For instance, Independence Day is a buggy wonder on most MMX Pentiums—often crashing immediately after the game starts. On the TD-225, it lasts 10 minutes or so before it crashes.

My biggest complaint with the TD-225 was Intergraph's own Intense 3D 100 accelerator. This upgraded 4MB Rendition card wasn't happy with much of anything. In addition to some unfixable DirectX display incompatibilities in Red Alert, the system froze every time we started a new game of Quake. Thankfully, Intergraph is using 4MB Matrox Millennium accelerators in the TD-225 systems it's marketing.

Since we asked that the TD-225 be shipped

with the Intense 3D 100, and the evaluation agreement prevented us from substituting a different video card on our own, it would be unfair to rate the system too harshly. Despite the video problems, it's safe to say that the Pentium II is an exceptional high-end game platform. The TD-225

266MHz package is also available with a Panasonic 17-inch monitor, 32MB of RAM, a 1.7GB hard drive, and Ensoniq speakers for \$3,200 direct from Intergraph. (Intergraph; 800-692-8069; www.intergraph.com; list \$3,200)

-George Chronis

HOW FAST IS IT?

Processor Score:

. . .

Video Score: Hard Drive Score: 142 329

230

*PC Games Labs uses a standard Acer 200MHz Pentium as a baseline system for comparison, with baseline benchmarks of 100 in processor, video, and hard-drive categories. Computer systems are compared using WinBench 97.

Micron Millennia XRU 266

RATING: A-

A s a gamer who desires the latest and greatest hardware, it was easy to get excited when a brand-spanking-new Pentium II got dropped in my lap. Micron is already shipping machines continued on page 176



HARDWARE SPUTLIGHT TECHNOBARBLE

FUNWire Party Kit & Home Arcade

RATING: A

of setting up a home Ethernet-based network (as illustrated in our September issue) for head-to-head gaming seems a little over the top, there are now two excellent alternatives. The FUNWire 2 User Party Kit and FUNWire Home Arcade, both from Moses, offer specialized hardware and software to get two computers in your house connected. Both kits work with IPX, NetBIOS, and Windows 95 network standards. Because we couldn't think of any networkable games that didn't use one of these, you're covered as far as compatibility goes.

The Party Kit, which runs \$69, uses special adapters that convert an existing parallel port into a network port. You take about a 5 percent performance bit in terms

of bandwidth, but since both products offer over 3 Mbtts of throughput, and most games use only a small portion of that, you won't notice the difference. Because it uses a parallel port, the Party Kit is a great way to hook your portable up to your desktop system at home and then detach it when you're done playing.

The Home Arcade plugs into an internal ISA slot, but it offers more cabling

(25 feet versus 12 feet) than the Party Kit. That aside, it's impossible to tell the difference between the two systems in terms of performance. The Home Arcade does cost less, at just \$49.

Of course, if you have more than two machines, you can add more nodes one at a time, though each additional node will cost what you paid for the starter kit. You can string up to 100 feet of what is essentially telephone cable between any two machines, but you have to buy the cable separately.

Installation and setup are straightforward, and we didn't run into any incompatibility trouble—though Moses warns that some games may be incompatible. All in all, the FUNWire kits offer a quick, inexpensive way to link up and play. (Moses; 800-882-6673; www.moses-tin.com; street \$69, \$49) — David Gerding

ignore the boxes' cheesy artwork Moses' FUNWire lets offer cheap PC networking

Matrox Millennium II

BATING: A

he Matrox Milennium graphics card has become something of a legend among graphics adapters. For several years, the card managed to stay consistently on top of the competition: quite an accomplishment in a world where graphics chipsets tend to better each other on a nearly monthly basis. For a long time, those looking for the fastest 2D graphics needed to look no further than the Millennium. Now Matrox has finally updated the aging architecture, delivering the Millennium II. This board is the brawny big brother of Matrox's Mystique board, which has proven very popular because of its low price and add-on video- and TV-card capabilities.

Despite what some salesmen may say, the Millennium II isn't for PC gamers looking for 3D hardware acceleration. Though it's got basic 3D acceleration, it's not the sort to deliver compelling 3D performance. No, the



Millennium II is all about 2D acceleration and video playback, areas in which it excels. While 3D games dominate the headlines, the majority of games out there remain 2D. The Millennium II delivers consis-

tent best-ofbreed Windows and DOS 2D performance—



The Millennium II

right up there with Diamond's Stealth 2000 Pro and STB's Nitro cards.

The Millennium II scored a 267 in PC Games' 2D benchmark tests, compared to the Stealth 2000 Pro's 224 rating. If you're a gamer willing to spend the premium on a fast 2D card, and you've already fixed yourself up with a 3Dfx or PowerVR pass-through accelerator, the Millennium II is a great fit.

The board supports high refresh rates across all resolutions, as well as high resolutions beyond 1600-by-1200 for those with a monitor that can support them. The drivers are stable, and the board includes the MGA control panel, which extends the functionality of Windows 95 graphics settings. It also comes with a generous collection of graphics-related utilities and applications. For computer gainers who demand the best 2D performance, the Millennium II is the best game in town. (Matrox; 800-361-1408; www.matrox.com; street \$260)

-David Gerding

TECHNOBABBLE HARDWARE SPOTLIGHT

Hitachi CM751U

RATING: A-

hat a surprise! Bundled with the new Micron Pentium II (also reviewed in this issue) was a wonderful Hitachi 19-inch monitor, the CM751U. Part of Hitachi's SuperScan Elite series, this unit has single-handedly changed my position on whether big screens are worth the bother for PC gaming. While I still have reservations about 21-inch screens



Hitachi's 19-inch: a harmonious marriage between size and excellent picture quality.

and their frequently foggy picture quality, Hitachi's 19-inch is superb.

With a .22 dot pitch, the CM751U provides exceptional clarity out to the edges of its 18 inches of viewing area. Unlike some other multiscan monitors, the Hitachi's circuitry really does remember your stored choices when you adjust screen borders to fit specific games. What's more, this monitor has a very manageable footprint, a critical consideration when your desktop has to share space with speaker systems and all manner of joysticks and throttles.

Compared to flashy monitor cases from Sony or NEC, the Hitachi's casing comes off as utilitarian. But at \$1,200 on the street, the CM751U delivers one of the best CRTs in this size range, looks be damned. Until we see truly flat, affordable, LCD big-screen monitors in a few years, my vote for the best in size/picture-quality value for computer

gaming is going to be the 19-inch. Let's hope other manufacturers embrace this monitor size. (NSA Hitachi: 800-441-4832; www.nsa-hi tachi.com: street \$1,200)

-George T. Chronis

Maxi Sound Theater 64

RATING: B

Plug and Pray, indeed.

That's the unfortunate story behind the Maxi Sound Game Theater 64, a wonderfully featured 64-voice ISA sound card that lets you manipulate game and other sound to the nth degree-assuming you can get the thing working. If you have any other devices in your PC-a 3D card, an MPEG board, you name it-don't count on a snappy installation.

In fact, we wrestled for the better part of a day simply to get the Game Theater up and running. It's fair enough to have to remove an existing sound card, but we also had to remove a PCI MPEG board before we could persuade Windows 95 to take on the whole Maxi Sound driver package. And several games tripped the card up. For instance, IRQ and DMA channels had to be reset for Shadow Warrior and Duke Nukem before the Maxi would accept music and sound.

Once the Game Theater is working, you've got an impressive arsenal of soundtweaking at your disposal. The onboard 4MB of RAM allows 64 MIDI voices, and a nifty feature called the Maxi-Bank Downloader lets vou access a massive number of different wavetable voices. For the professional musician-capable, the bundled Cakewalk software allows plug-ins from any MIDI instrument. There are presets for some 30 games, and you can change such qualities as reverb and echo on the fly from within a game-even creating different settings for different portions of games. Also, you can create sound-



Thrust Master Top Gun

RATING: B

t looks and feels like the classic ThrustMaster Flight Control System. Thankfully, it performs like the old FCS, too. So what's new with the Top Gun flightstick? Not much. But it's got a cool logo from the nice folks over at Paramount.

The Top Gun stick's trigger, four-way hat switch, and three supplemental buttons are all you need from a ThrustMaster stick. The handle features a nice neoprene (a fancy word for rubber) grip with serrated faces for a good hold.

The new stick's most noticeably different in that it's much stiffer, so you have to work harder to make things happen. This works wonderfully while playing X-Wing vs. TIE Fighter: the Top Gun provides good con-

trol of minute alterations and eliminates a lot of the bobbing and weaving that looser sticks often engender.

Because it lacks a throttle, the Top Gun probably isn't the best choice for serious flightsim people. But as a virtuous middle-of-the-road

flightstick, it's very easy to recom-

mend. For the money-you should be able to find it at a street price of around \$30-the Top Gun is a solid pick. (ThrustMaster; 503-615-3200; www.thrustmas ter.com; street \$30) -Daniel Morris

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Indicate this is



enhancement presets on your own for any game, even DOS-based ones. For major soundheads, this will be a delight.

The Game Theater is being distributed by Ubi Soft, which has bundled a version of POD to take advantage of another capability—3D positional audio, impressively handled by this Dolby Surround-enabled card with either two speakers or four for front-to-back effects. While it's not the best choice for newbes, the Game Theater promises a real payoff if you're prepared to struggle with the technical hurdles. (Guillemot Industries; 415-547-4050; www.guillemot.com; street \$199)

CyberMan 2

RATING: C+

If you listen to Logitech, the CyberMan 2 represents the next stage in the evolution of gaming

peripherals. To me, it looks like a digital joystick refashioned to work like an oversized gamepad. Instead of a stick, your right hand is presented with a far knob, and your left hand rests on a contoured hump with easy access to eight programmable buttons.

The idea is to give gamers easier movement in true 3D environments. The CyberMan 2 allows for six degrees of freedom along x, y, and z axes—using the knob for pitch and yaw as well as forward, back, left, and right movement. This setup is obviously useful in games such as Descent, where you need spherical movement with no real up/down. Outside of Descent, the CyberMan 2 may prove to be an asset

CyberMan 2 may prove to be an asset with certain games but more of a distraction for many others. For example, control of mechs in MechWarrior 2 and G-NOME was enhanced—making it much easier to pivot your cockpit in one direction while moving in another. The same couldn't be said for fast movement in first-person games such as Quake or Duke 3D, where the CyberMan 2 wasn't up to the finer control needs of spirited deathmatches.

But the most telling ding in the CyberMan 2's armor is a street price of \$100. At that amount, it's hard to recommend it to anyone but the most curious peripherals aficionados. It's an intriguing arcade-style controller with a promising design; but given its limited boost to game performance, it's not a compelling purchase. (Logitech; 800-231-7717; www.logitech.com; street \$100)

-Daniel Morris



Saitek's amazing first effort.

mechanisms, both devices exhibit smooth yet precise movement arcs requiring moderate input effort. Like everything else on this stick and throttle, the buttons and control knobs are also of high-quality design and have proven to be smooth operators. One extremely nice touch for anyone who has not yet invested in rudder pedals is a rudder toggle on the underside of the throttle grip. It's easy to find and operate, and it provides enough travel to be useful in air combat. And for those who'd rather not take their hands from the controls, there's a small mouse-controller stub—which can be enabled with the proper cabling—right next to your thumb on the throttle.

At \$150 for the pair, the X36 system is very reasonably priced. And if you don't want both units, Saitek makes the X36F programmable joystick available separately for \$99. The X35T throttle, nonprogrammable when separated from the X36F, sells for \$69.95 by itself. Saitek says it will produce a stand-alone \$99 programmable throttle down the road.

Included with all packages is an easy-to-use Windows 95 control panel that permits full programmability of every button when both units are linked. However, if total customizability becomes too daunting, the pair can emulate a CH Products duo with the press of a button and some changes to the control panel. Unfortunately, setting up this CH emulation isn't very intuitive, and the sparse instructions aren't exactly forth-coming. Once you get the hang of it, though, the whole process takes less than five minutes. Despite the fact that most new systems come with PS/2 keyboard hook-ups, Saitek assumes that everyone uses the old-fashioned round connectors, so expect to spend a few extra dollars for adapters.

The best news is that the X36 system will make you a better pilot—it immediately improved my performance in X-Wing vs. TIE Fighter. Now where did I put that copy of Air Warrior II? (Sairek Industries; 310-212-5412; www.saitek. com; street \$150) —George T. Chronis

Saitek X36 Flight Control System

RATING: A-

s someone who's never been a big flight-sim fan, I've never lusted after any particular joysticks, throttles, or rudder pedals. Until now, I saw joysticks as utilitarian workhorses carrying their weight in everything from Quake to MechWarrior 2. But when the good man from Saitek put the X36 Flight Control System on my desk, I became a believer.

For the first time, here was a joystick and throttle that quickened my pulse as masterful examples of industrial design. ThrustMaster sticks have always struck me as well-constructed models that require too much brawn to operate. As for CH sticks, the control mechanisms always seem too loose, and I've never been happy with the quality of plastic. Yet with this Saitek duo, not only are both constructed of extremely high-quality materials, but the fit and finish would make any German car-maker proud. As control

TECHNOBABBLE HARDWARE SPUTLIGHT

Princeton Ultra 20

RATING: B

Eyestrain used to be a big problem for me. Keeping track of all those little Red Alert guys on a small monitor screen really contributes to vision loss. My Ruskies are a lot bigger now on Princeton Graphic Systems' Ultra 20-inch, and my eyes are a lot happier.

Installing the Ultra 20 is quick. Everything is plug-and-play simple—just a matter of plugging the power cord and monitor cables into the back of the computer. A word of warning for couch potatoes, though: this monitor is heavy, so be sure to recruit a buddy to help you move it around.

We love to play Quake on big screens here at PC Games, and the Ultra 20 doesn't disappoint. The 18.9 inches of viewable real estate gives the sensation of actually being in the game. So much so, I caught myself physically dodging incoming rockets. Pixelation and flicker are never a problem, even in high-resolution modes, despite the nowstandard .28mm dot pitch and a high 135MHz refresh rate. The nonglare, anti-static, flat square tube delivers outstanding picture clarity, too.

Princeton incorporates easy-to-use controls for brightness, contrast, horizontal and vertical phase and size, and degauss. But the Ultra isn't as proficient at adapting to different screen resolutions as other monitors, forcing the user to adjust the screen borders manually every time resolution





High-end sound, high-end price.

changes. Still, at a street price of around \$1,000, it's an excellent big-screen value. (Princeton Graphic Systems; 800-747-6249; www.prgr.com; street \$1,000) — Chris Tou

PowerRamp MITE

RATING: C+

Designed with fighting games in mind, ACT Labs' PowerRamp MITE is a gamepad reminiscent in both look and feel to the Gravis GamePad Pro, which itself is styled after the original equipment gamepad included with Sony's PlayStation console.

The MITE offers a useful 10-in-1 programming feature that lets you program up to 10 keystrokes into one button, allowing for development of complex combination macros and kill

moves that can save PC fighting fans a lot of hassle. The pad is programmable during play, through a fairly simple (if occasionally arduous) keyboard setup. Unfortunately, there's nothing beyond the macros to offer anyone but Virtua Fighter addicts any reason to buy this gamepad instead of the Gravis GrIP or Microsoft SideWinder—both of which are daisy-chainable, unlike the MITE.

Because the MITE has to be set up through your keyboard port, you have to deal with a lot of tedious cable-swapping and adapters. This can be a big problem if you have other input peripherals you like to use. It's all worth it if fight-

Bose MediaMate Speakers

RATING: B

ou can pay \$4,000 for a top-of-the-line game PC, but a bad set of speakers can ruin your whole gaming experience—an all-too-frequent occurrence. That's why it's refreshing to come across products that exceed expectations, such as Bose's MediaMate speakers.

Setup was as easy as plugging in three cords. Popping one of my favorite audio CDs into the tray proved that my P200 can now double as a high-end stereo. Despite deceptively small dimensions of 3.5 inches by 8.5 inches each, this pair of speakers packs quite a punch—it produces a perfect high end and a deep, strong bass. Best of all, there's virtually no distortion.

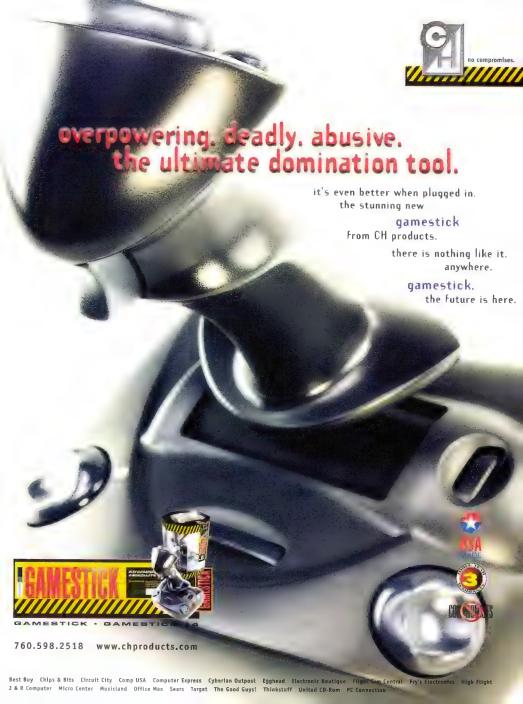
These speakers perform just as impressively with games. Red Alert's digitized speech, sound effects, and great CD audio tracks make it a perfect test candidate. The speakers soldiered through without a hitch, producing every "Yes sir!" as clearly as a grunt next to me would. Next I tried out Descent II, because its fast action requires good sound, or the experience suffers. Again, the Bose speakers excelled.

The MediaMate speakers more than live up to Bose's reputation for high quality. If you have the \$300 to burn and desk space is a premium, they're an excelent choice. (Bose; 800-444-2673; www.bose.com; street \$300) — Chris Tou

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ing games are your reason for living; otherwise, pass on this one. (ACT Labs; 604-278-3650; www.actlab.com/gamegear; list \$39.99)

-Daniel Morris



TECHNOBABBLE

continued from page 168

at the highest end of processing power, and the XRU range seems ideal for the power user with a bank balance to match his appetite for fine gaming hardware.

Our test XRU system came equipped with the Pentium II 266MHz processor, 32MB of EDO RAM, a Quantum Fireball 6GB hard drive (handily partitioned into three neat chunks), and a 4MB Diamond Stealth 3D 2000 Pro graphics card, aided and abetted by the Diamond Monster 3D accelerator. It reads like gaming nirvana right off the bat.

This meaty core is enhanced by a Hitachi 20x CD-ROM drive, a Sportster 56K internal modem, and a Yamaha sound system (possibly the most disappointing feature). It's topped off with a 100MB Iomega Zip drive, Packaged in Micron's easy-to-open mini tower case, most components are well laid out, allaying some of my basic upgrading fears. (Yes, even this beast will need upgrading at some point.)

The Monster 3D and 56K modem aren't standard in the XRU line, but anyone serious about gameplay should consider them must-have enhancements. To be honest, there's hardly a game around at the moment that this system's innate power can't fully do justice to, although Empire's

Pro Pinball: Timeshock! still couldn't be played on board supporting two USB ports, ready for the its highest possible settings.

Just what do you need? While DirectX was included

on the system, it wasn't set up, leaving the user to bear the brunt of that painful and somewhat scary exercise. In this instance, after rebooting with DirectX installed, the CD-ROM drive disappeared. It reappeared after another reboot, but

it's this kind of flakiness that system manufacturers ought to take some responsibility for, despite the fact that Microsoft's ultimately responsible.

Micron's reputation for producing solid machines remains intact, although it does still overlook good old DOS. While DOS is now effectively obsolete, many gamers still want their equipment (particularly the CD-ROM drive) configured for it. No dice. All the drivers are included, so it's possible to work it out for yourself, but it's an oversight that ought to be reconsidered as these machines leave the factory.

The bundled productivity and operating software includes the most recent office releases, and a couple of MMX-enhanced CDs (notably POD) are thrown in too. In preparation for the future, the Millennia XRU comes with a motherday these peripherals make it to the mass market.

> Considering that a base unit (without monitor) can be had for somewhere

around the \$2,200 mark, anyone wanting to upgrade from a sagging 486 should start looking at this kind of deal. Gamers are well catered to in almost every respect-though as a personal preference, I'd suggest asking for an AWE32 sound card, So bring along your joystick, get a .26 dot pitch monitor, and you'll find gaming heaven very close at hand. (Micron Electronics; 800-438-3343; www.micronpc.com; street \$2,200)

-Rob Smith

HOW FAST IS IT? Processor Score: 228 Video Score: 250

Hard Drive Score: 152 *PC Games Labs uses a standard Acer 200MHz Pentium as a baseline system for comparison, with baseline benchmarks of 100 in processor. video, and hard-drive categories. Computer

systems are compared using WinBench 97.

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ECHNOBABBLE

I have Windows 95 and DOS to run my games, but I don't like pressing F8 or using a boot disk every time I want to play games from DOS. Is there any way to make a custom menu come up every time you boot up, like DOS 6.0 has, so that I can choose whether to use Win 95 or DOS? If not, what startup files does Windows look for when you do press F8 and choose "Previous Version of DOS"?

Jason Polaske Via email

No problem. A little tweaking of the MSDOS.SYS file will let you set your system to boot directly to DOS, boot to Windows in DOS mode, or offer you a menu of options.

Here's what you need to do: . First, find the MSDOS.SYS file using either Windows Explorer or the My Computer utility. (You'll find it in the root directory of your boot drive, which is generally C.) Make a backup copy of the file, just in case you make a mistake and want to get back easily to where you started. Next, right-click on the MSDOS.SYS file and select Properties. When the Properties dialog box appears, uncheck the Read Only box and click OK.

Now you're ready to edit the file. Rightclick on MSDOS.SYS again and select Open With, Pick WordPad or NotePad from the list and click OK. Go to the Options section of MSDOS.SYS and locate the line that reads "BootGUI=1". If you want to start your system with Windows in MS-DOS mode, just change this line to read "BootGUI=0". Then, when you're ready to load Windows itself, you just need to type WIN at the DOS prompt and hit Enter. If you want to have your system automatically offer a menu of boot choices, add the line &BootMenu=1 to the Options section of MSDOS.SYS. There's no direct route to booting to your previous version of DOS-except for using a boot disk, of course. But you can make it easier to get to that point by adding the line "BootMult=1" to the Options section. After that, when you see the "Starting Windows" message during bootup, bitting the F4 key will load your previous version of DOS instead of booting into Windows.

Once you've finished editing the MSDOS.SYS file, remember to save it as a text file rather than as a formatted word-processor file.

I need answers! I just purchased a Sierra Screamin' 3D graphics card (which I am very happy to have) for my Pentium 133 with 32MB of RAM. With this card, can I play games designed for faster machines such as the Pentium 166 or 200 and actually enjoy them without the pauses and low detail? Can I run Interstate '76 on high detail and high resolution without deathly slow gameplay? Will my card be useful for games to come?

Andre Via email

> For most systems, the graphics adapter and limited system memory are usually the most serious bottlenecks when it comes to game performance. Your 32MB of

> > system RAM should be more than



today, and the Sierra Screamin' 3D should get you past most potential graphics-adapter bottlenecks. You can certainly count on better performance with the Screamin' 3D when running games that support 3D than you'll get from a non-3D card. Bear in mind, however, that the Sierra Screamin' 3D is a relatively low-cost (\$149.95 list) 3D graphics adapter, and it's not-according to most published benchmarks-the fastest 3D card on the market.

Also, don't make the mistake of thinking that putting a fast graphics adapter in a computer means it can run a game designed for a machine with a faster processor. Games are processed by the CPU time as well as the graphics adapter, and you can't expect a game to perform well if you're using a processor that's slower than recommended by the game's publisher.

As for the future, you're safe as far as your graphics adapter is concerned...for at least a year or two. But game developers are always pushing

Custom startup options, 3D card boons, and the lowdown on 500MHz brocessors

By Patrick Marshall

the limits and requiring faster, higher-performance bardware, and it's likely that a couple of years from now the hottest new game titles will require the hottest new graphics adapters.

Alpha CPU what? I've heard about this CPU made by Digital Equipment Corp. that supposedly runs from 366MHz to 500MHz! What is this powerful thing? Do you know anything about it? Can it be used in an Intel 82430FX motherboard?

Patrick Lebner

Via email

Well, you've got part of the story right. The Alpha microprocessor, made by Digital Equipment, is about twice as fast as the Pentium processor. Unfortunately, several factors have prevented consumers from flocking to the Alpha chip. First, the processors have historically been a lot more expensive than Pentium processors. Secondly, Alpha CPUs can't simply be plopped into motherboards designed for Pentium processors. Instead, the Alpha must be used with a motherboard designed for the Alpha, and these are generally about twice as expensive as Intelcompatible motherboards. Also, software has to be written specifically for the Alpha processor, and there isn't a wide variety of Alpha software available. You can run Windows software on Alpha systems by using an emulation package, but that slows performance considerably. These obstacles have prevented the Alpha, despite its blazing speed. from securing more than a tiny market share. The chip accounts for only about 1 percent of the microprocessor market, while Intel owns about 92 percent of the market. DEC is trying to shoot for a larger piece of the pie: The company just introduced a new line of lower-cost Alpha chips-the Alpha 21164PC-which will be available in 400MHz. 466MHz, and 533MHz versions. These chips will cost computer-makers between \$295 and \$495 apiece-very competitive with Intel's Pentium line.

Fax, mail, or email your queries to the S.O.S. staff at: **PC Games**

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Repeat, or Just Peat?

Snipe

Scarface

re there too many sequels clogging up computer-game shelves, and is the rush to establish a franchise title edging out creative and innovative games? Are game developers and publishers poisoning the marketplace by catering to established hits? Scarface argues in **bold** that it would be better for the industry if all sequels would just disappear, while Snipe intones in *italies* that sequels are necessary to the future of games.

The computer-game industry should stop making sequels. Period. As drastic as this sounds, I say that with each of these sequels, our industry digs its own grave an inch deeper.

Whoa, boy! I have a two-title response: MechWarrior 2 and Civilization II. Fine games both, but so what? You cannot continue to narrow the interest of gamers. Eventually, that interest is narrowed into oblivion. Game companies are too eager to exploit a proven success, and the consequence is that they stop looking

beyond repeating vestervear's hit. This is bad for the industry in the long term, hecause the attention paid to these A-list sequels drowns out any chance of broadening the appeal of computer games to an audience wider than the one already

established.
Wrong. Your argument assumes that developers and publishers are "narrowing" the range of games, but you don't prove this. I can just as easily say that gamers have narrowed their own focus and our industry is only responding to what gamers want. And what do they want? They want fun, and they want value. Sure, you and I are lucky enough to have new games sent to us free for review, but if you're laying out \$45 to \$60 of your own cash, then you want a sure thing. You also assume that sequels are no better than the originals. Again, I disagree. Red Alert extended what was already good about C&C—making it a better experience—and gamers responded. It looks as though Jedi Knight and Ouake 2 will do the same.

But with each blockbuster sequel catering to the same established audience, the broader appeal of computer gaming is thinned even more. What impetus is there for a nongamer to pick up Wing Commander Prophecy when the first four games didn't appeal to him? Companies become so entrenched in franchise thinking that it's ALL they think about. In so doing, they write off a huge potential audience

for new ideas by settling for the same audience or less over and over. It's like a well: You can dip your bucket lower and lower and the water keeps coming up, but someday the well's gonna run dry. And then we'll be sorry we didn't spend a little effort digging for new wells.

That's short-sighted. People with a creative vision will find a way to try something new and creative. Chris Roberts left Origin with a number of his coworkers to start Digital Anvul after making Wing Commander IV—with the expressed purpose of making great new games they couldn't make before. John Romero has said that this is much the same reason why he left id to start Ion Storm. And remember, hit sequels paid for these opportunities—in money AND in clout.

How much different is a Chris Roberts or John Romero game from

what the rest of the industry is making? Maybe better, but not much different. Game companies are increasingly looking like their Hollywood counterparts—content to wallow in the same miserable trough from which they can barely feed as it is. Death to the stale.

from which they can barely feed as it is. Death to the stale.

Why does our industry insist on paralyzing itself with self-loathing? Why can't publishers take their games seriously enough to attempt a grab at the great, diverse masses of people who avoid computer games precisely because of the homogeneity of the industry's sequel-centric death trance?

First, since we haven't seen final golds yet, I'll give

benefit of the doubt—that they will create what they say they will. Second, Quake and Wing Commander are great games. If these guys improve upon great, then I'm a happy gamer, and I would submit that you should be too.

Roberts and Romero the

I wouldn't be a happy gamer—I'd be a content gamer. And the entire industry is content right now to build incrementally on what it's achieved. Maybe if we stopped buying sequels like slavish Pavlovian dogs, we would jar the industry into addressing all of our unmet

Scar, I am sympathetic to your sentiment, but I suggest the solution is not to buy less of anything, but to buy MORE innovative games in addition to the old reliable sequels. I still maintain that innovation appears often enough—The Neverhood, Twinsen's Odyssey, MDK. It's up to gamers to buy more of these games so that the industry will be encouraged to take additional risks.

While Snipe still enjoys playing Lords of the Realm II, Scarface keeps himself busy by heckling game-industry executives at posh San Francisco eateries.

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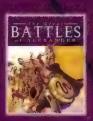
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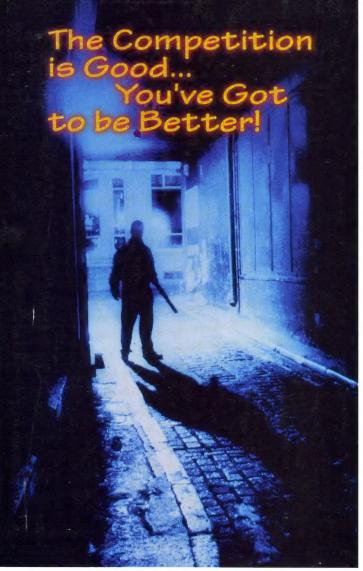
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